

Dr. Jonathan V. Wright's

NUTRITION & HEALING

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4 steps to curing the common condition your doctor may be overlooking

By Jonathan V. Wright, M.D.

At least three to four times a month, I see patients with a condition that their primary care doctors have completely missed. In fact, I saw this easy diagnosis completely ignored again—twice—just last week. And along with the missed diagnosis goes the wrong type of treatment for some of its symptoms. This doesn't help the real problem at all but actually allows it to progress and lead to a whole new set of symptoms and health concerns. I'm talking about the ever-increasing instances of a condition known as insulin resistance.

When Mrs. Williams* came to the Tahoma Clinic with this problem, she had a pretty typical case. Her doctor had given her a statin drug for high cholesterol and an ACE inhibitor for high blood pressure. He told her that these problems were caused by her obesity, and that she should go onto a low-fat, calorie-controlled diet to lose weight. She'd tried very conscientiously, and brought in the diet records to prove it. Over several months she'd lost only three pounds, and was very frustrated. Her cholesterol and blood pressure were lower, likely due to the patent medications, but she "just didn't feel right" and wanted to know if there were any vitamins, minerals,

or herbs that would control her cholesterol and blood pressure just as well.

I asked her if any of her relatives had type 2 diabetes, and she said yes, her mother's sister, but her own blood sugar was normal, so that wasn't her problem. Then I asked her if the doctor who'd prescribed the

"Implementing these strategies now will not only lower your cholesterol, blood pressure, and weight, but they'll also reduce—even eliminate—your risk of type 2 diabetes."

patent medications had checked her for insulin resistance or explained "Syndrome X" to her. She looked puzzled, and said "no"—he hadn't mentioned diabetes at all.

So I explained to her that her high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and even her obesity were probably "secondary" problems, and that her primary problem was very, very likely a case of undiagnosed and mistreated insulin resistance. The patent medications she'd been given made as much sense as

clamping a lid on a pot of hot water to prevent it from boiling over, instead of turning down the heat.

But there are better solutions for alleviating these symptoms—ones that address the underlying cause safely and naturally. When her test results came back positive for insulin resistance, Mrs. Williams started using them: I'm happy to report that she's already making great progress. And so can you. In fact, implementing these strategies now will not only lower your cholesterol, blood pressure, and weight, but they'll also reduce—even eliminate—your risk of type 2 diabetes.

Getting rid of the problem that just won't go away

We've covered insulin resistance in bits and pieces before (*Nutrition & Healing* July and August 2001, and June 2004) but since cases are increasing rather than decreasing, and since mainstream physicians simply won't diagnose it (or perhaps don't know how to), it's time to go over it more completely.

Like many other health problems, insulin resistance has both a genetic and an environmental component. If you have these genetics (and estimates are that over 90 million Americans

* name has been changed

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Nutrition & Healing is dedicated to helping you keep yourself and your family healthy by the safest and most effective means possible. Every month, you'll get information about diet, vitamins, minerals, herbs, natural hormones, natural energies, and other substances and techniques to prevent and heal illness, while prolonging your healthy life span.

A graduate of Harvard University and the University of Michigan Medical School (1969), Dr. Jonathan V. Wright has been practicing natural and nutritional medicine at the Tahoma Clinic in Kent, Washington, since 1973. Based on enormous volumes of library and clinical research, along with tens of thousands of clinical consultations, he is exceptionally well-qualified to bring you a unique blending of the most up-to-date information and the best and still most effective natural therapies developed by preceding generations.

Nutrition & Healing cannot improve on these famous words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The inalienable right to life must include the right to care for one's own life. The inalienable right to liberty must include the right to choose whatever means we wish to care for ourselves. In addition to publishing the best of information about natural health care, *Nutrition & Healing* urges its readers to remember their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and freedom of choice in health care. This information is published to help in the effort to exercise these inalienable rights, and to warn of ever-present attempts of both government and private organizations to restrict them.

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do), and you eat sugar on or in anything, your body responds—and not favorably.

Let's go over some of the mechanics involved:

When you eat or drink refined sugar—especially fructose, high fructose corn syrup, sucrose, and dextrose—your blood sugar goes much higher than it does when you eat the sugar as part of its "original package" (whole fruit, whole corn, or sugar cane). Your pancreas "cranks up" in response to this sugar overload and makes an overly large quantity of insulin to help clear the excess sugar from the blood stream. Nearly everyone's metabolic response to refined sugar follows this pattern.

People with a genetic disposition towards insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes also have an extra burden in terms of diet: Simply eating too many carbs overall—even if they are from whole, natural sources—can lead to insulin resistance, too, even though it definitely takes longer than it would from eating sugar and refined carbohydrates.

If you've inherited the genetics for insulin resistance, and this pattern happens over and over again, your cells that receive insulin become resistant to repeated exposures. Because of this resistance, as the years go by, your pancreas is forced to make more and more insulin to keep your blood sugar levels under control. Those higher levels of insulin "work" for awhile, but then the receiver cells become even more resistant, so your pancreas must make even more insulin, and the "more insulin/more resistance/even more insulin/even more resistance" spiral continues ever upward, until the insulin simply can't overcome the resistance at all. At that point, the blood sugar can't be regulated, and type 2 diabetes is the ultimate result.

While they're on the way up, those ever-increasing levels of insulin can cause other problems as well: They can cause your liver's production of LDL (bad) cholesterol to increase and it's production of HDL (good) cholesterol to decrease. They can also prompt the kidneys to retain sodium, or the adrenal glands to secrete too much adrenalin, (or both), resulting in higher and higher blood pressure. Most noticeably, the combination of refined sugar and carbohydrate—or simply carbohydrate—consumption and the excess insulin secretion commonly results in increased synthesis of triglycerides (the fat inside body cells), resulting in obesity.

You could wind up with just one of these problems, a combination, or, like Mrs. Williams, all of them.

Mainstream treatment is masking the problem —not solving it

But instead of looking at these conditions as symptoms of one overall condition and addressing them at the source, nearly all mainstream doctors respond by prescribing patent anti-hypertensive and statin medications, as if high blood pressure and cholesterol are always due to patent medication deficiency.

Then, when type 2 diabetes ultimately shows up in these

individuals, they prescribe yet another patent medication to “control” blood sugar, usually adding it to the “diet” of anti-hypertensive and lipid-lowering patent medications already prescribed.

Patent medication companies are increasing the pressure on mainstream doctors to prescribe in this way. In July, a panel of “experts” from the American Heart Association and the National Institutes of Health issued new guidelines for the use of cholesterol-lowering drugs that would increase the number of Americans “eligible” for them from approximately 36 million to approximately 43 million. But the nine-expert panel neglected to disclose that eight of them had received money from some of the biggest patent medicine companies, including Pfizer, Merck, Squibb, and AstraZeneca. Disclosure of these ties came only after an outcry by consumer groups.

Similarly, “experts” are also urging mainstream physicians to prescribe ever-increasing quantities of patented anti-hypertensives, as “guidelines for healthy blood pressure” call for lower and lower blood pressure readings.

And the pressure isn’t just on physicians: *Who hasn’t seen a TV commercial (usually featuring smiling senior citizens) telling us that the way to control cholesterol or high blood pressure is the patent medication they’re touting?*

Your step-by-step guide for changing the channel on insulin resistance

So it’s time to change the channel once and for all and get to the root of the problem. Here are the steps for doing just that:

1.) Diagnosing insulin resistance

You’ve probably heard of the glucose tolerance test. It’s the

standard tool used to diagnose diabetes. Insulin resistance is diagnosed in exactly the same way, but with an extra step taken by the laboratory. Each time one of the blood specimens is tested for glucose, it’s also tested for insulin, which is why it’s called the glucose tolerance insulin resistance test (GT-IRT). The lab technicians look for several different patterns of higher insulin that are unique to people with insulin resistance.¹ (For further details about testing for insulin resistance, see *Nutrition & Healing* July 2001)

If your GT-IRT shows you do have insulin resistance, that means you’re also at an increased risk for type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is always preceded by insulin resistance. But it takes decades before it results in the actual onset of the disease: I’ve seen positive insulin resistance tests in teenagers, and children as young as eight. So there’s absolutely no reason at all for type 2 diabetes to “sneak up” on anyone; it can always be predicted by a positive insulin resistance test. And you can avoid it altogether by implementing the next few steps.

2.) Toss the sugar and refined carbs

Eliminating all refined sugars is priority No. 1. Although refined carbohydrates don’t cause damage as fast, they still cause the same problems, and must be eliminated too. Even if you don’t have the genetics for developing insulin resistance, refined sugar will cause you health problems—at the very least accelerated aging. Remember, humans are “designed” to digest and metabolize whole, natural foods, not refined foods. All of our ancestors for hundreds of thousands of years ate absolutely no refined food of any kind.

Admittedly, these are probably the hardest steps of the bunch: Over the years, refined sugar and

flour have made their way into more foods than you can even imagine. But it is possible, and there are a few “tricks” you can use to make it a bit simpler.

First, reading labels—and knowing what to look for on them—is crucial. Look for ingredients like high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, and enriched flour. If the product contains any of these, don’t buy it. In fact, you’ll be better off avoiding packaged foods altogether, which explains why this step can be so difficult: Supermarket shelves are stocked primarily with processed, packaged foods, and I’d be willing to bet that 90 percent of them contain some sort of refined sugar or carb.

Shopping along the outer edges of the grocery store—where fruits, vegetables, and meats are usually located—will make avoiding the packaged stuff a little easier. And you may also want to find a natural food store in your area. While not everything these stores carry is truly healthy, they often have more options in terms of products made without refined ingredients. These methods of shopping will also help you transition into the next step:

3.) Eat a high-protein, low-carb diet

My No. 1 recommendation is the “original human diet,” which I outlined in the January 2003 issue of *Nutrition & Healing*—or the versions of it explained in the books *The Paleo Diet* by Loren Cordain, Ph.D., and *The Paleolithic Diet Prescription* by S. Boyd Eaton, Ph.D., Marjorie Shostak, and Melvin Konner, Ph.D.

“Regular” high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet plans are OK too. The point is to regulate your blood sugar swings to avoid the release of excess insulin. Limiting your carb intake is the best way to do that—no matter which specific

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diet plan you choose.

4.) Take your vitamins

I wrote about supplements to reduce insulin resistance at length in the August 2001 *Nutrition & Healing* issue, so I've just listed them here, in the box to the right. Each of them should be taken daily.

However, you probably won't need to take each of these items separately, since many of them can be found together in good multiple formulations. Two formulas I have recommended to patients with success are *Glucobalance* and *Blood Sugar Improvement Formula*, both of which are available from the Tahoma Clinic Dispensary. There are other good multiple formulas available too; check your natural food store to see what they carry and compare the labels to the list of nutrients to the right to find the best one. So far, I haven't seen any single formula that contains all of the items listed in the amounts noted, so you'll probably need to take at least a few of them separately to make up for the ones your multi doesn't contain (or doesn't contain enough of).

4.) Get moving

Last, but not least, don't forget to exercise. After all, you can't expect eating right and supplementing to do all the work: Giving your food and supplements a fit, healthy environment to do their jobs will help your progress along even more. And you don't have to devote hours on end each day to high-impact aerobics classes. Even a 30-minute walk three times a week may be enough to make a difference. Check with your doctor about the right amount of exercise for you.

Find the real problem and eliminate many others

I'm sure you've noticed all the references to prior issues of

Your guide to beating insulin resistance in one, easy-to-follow outline

Here's what you need to do:

- Have a glucose tolerance insulin resistance test (GT-IRT) done. (The results will tell you for sure whether or not you have this condition.)
- Eliminate refined sugar and refined carbohydrates from your diet.
- Adopt a high-protein, low-carb diet.
- Begin an exercise program—even a low-intensity one, like walking for 30 minutes—several times a week.

And here's what you need to take:

- Chromium—1,000-2,000 micrograms
- Niacin—15-25 milligrams
- Niacinamide—50-100 milligrams
- Biotin—8 to 16 milligrams
- Alpha-lipoic acid—300 milligrams
- Co-Enzyme Q10—60 milligrams
- Vitamin K—5-10 milligrams daily
- Vitamin D—2,000 IU daily
- Vitamin E (as mixed tocopherols)—400 IU
- Vitamin C—2,000-3,000 milligrams
- Magnesium—300-400 milligrams
- Vanadium—1-2 milligrams
- Zinc—30 milligrams
- Copper—2 milligrams
- Manganese—5-10 milligrams

Look for a good multiple formula that combines many of these individual supplements. Check your natural food store to see what they carry, or try one of the following:

- Glucobalance
- Blood Sugar Improvement Formula

Nutrition & Healing, and may be wondering why I'm covering this material again. Unfortunately, the word just doesn't seem to have gotten out about insulin resistance—even though it was first described over 20 years ago. I'm seeing more people than ever who've been given patent medications to treat its symptoms (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high triglycerides) with no attention paid at all to the diagnosing and treating the real problem. And symptom treatment just doesn't cut it when it comes to preventing the ultimate onset of type 2 diabetes—and stopping the burgeoning epidemic of this disease.

So take a minute to see if any of the following criteria apply to you: high cholesterol, high triglycerides, high LDL cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol, or high blood pressure; overweight; a personal history of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar); a family history of type 2 diabetes; or any combination of these problems.

Of course, there are other reasons besides insulin resistance for elevated blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides, weight, and so on. But since insulin resistance is at the top of the "cause list" for these problems, it should always be checked. The more of these problems you have,

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Can you trust Horny Goat weed? Which herbal male performance boosters really work

By Kerry Bone

Herbs don't always have all the answers. This might surprise you, coming from me. But any good herbalist—or healthcare professional in general—knows that there's no one solution to every problem. Take erectile dysfunction, for example. When Viagra hit the market and was an instant hit, herbal supplement manufacturers rushed to get in on the action too, creating formulas that claimed to do the same thing at a fraction of the cost. The truth is, many of these products deliver only modest effects at best.

One of the more “colorful” of these is the traditional Chinese herb commonly known as Horny Goat Weed (*Epimedium sagittatum*). Despite its descriptive name, there are no clinical trials supporting its use for erectile dysfunction. So any claims made about it are based solely on traditional use.

But there are a few herbs that are credible male tonics, and while they may not provide dramatic results, they can at least help. If you want to avoid the pharmaceutical approach, your best herbal bets are as follows:

1.) Ginseng

Ginseng has proven itself an effective male tonic in two controlled clinical trials. In the most recently published study, conducted in Korea, 45 patients with clinically diagnosed erectile dysfunction received either 2.7 grams of red ginseng root or placebo each day for eight weeks. Patients treated with ginseng had significantly better scores on the International Index of Erectile Function than in those who received the placebo.¹

In the second clinical trial, also

conducted in Korea, the effect of red ginseng root on impotence was compared to placebo and the drug trazodone.² Researchers monitored 90 patients, with 30 patients in each group. The overall therapeutic efficacy on erectile dysfunction was 60 percent for the ginseng group and 30 percent each for the placebo- and trazodone-treated groups. In particular, volunteers reported that ginseng significantly improved libido.

“The truth is, many herbal male performance formulas deliver only modest effects at best...But there are a few credible ones that can help....”

2.) Damiana

This herb has been used by western herbalists for low libido and impotence for years.³ The plant is actually a native of Mexico and is still used there today as an aphrodisiac. Like Epimedium, there are no human clinical trials to support these uses, but in this case, there is an animal study that suggests it may improve male sexual performance. In this study, oral administration of damiana extract demonstrated a stimulating effect on the sexual behavior of male rats.⁴

3.) Tribulus

Maybe the most well-documented “herbal Viagra” is Tribulus terrestris. In one study, male rats experienced sexual stimulating effects after 20 days of oral Tribulus leaf extract.⁵

In another animal trial, male lambs and rams given 250 milligrams of Tribulus leaf extract for 40 days had increased testosterone concentrations compared to controls. It also accelerated sexual development, activated sperm production, and stimulated growth of the gonads in the immature sheep.⁶ A different study, this one on boars with established and prolonged sexual impotence, showed that oral administration of Tribulus for 10 days restored libido and sexual reflexes in 71 percent.⁷

And as for human trials, one of the most impressive involved 14 patients taking 1,500 milligrams of Tribulus leaf extract. After 30 days of treatment, only two of the patients hadn't experienced considerable improvement and one of them did show slight improvement after another 30 days of treatment.⁸

Unfortunately, many of the Tribulus products on the market don't reflect the same profile of phytochemicals as the extracts used in the studies. This is often due to the fact that many of the products use the root or the fruit of the Tribulus plant—not the leaf. So if you decide to try it, look for a formula that uses leaf extract.

Boost your performance without the risks

As I said, none of these may be the complete answer to your erectile dysfunction. But they may very well help boost your performance to some degree. And with the ever-increasing list of potential risks associated with Viagra, these herbs provide a safe option that's certainly worth a try. **KB**

Citations available upon request and on the Nutrition & Healing website: www.wrightnewsletter.com

High-tech magnet therapy making a difference in Parkinson's, nerve damage, COPD, and more

In April, I told you about Magnetic Molecular Energizer (MME) technology—the high strength magnetic field therapy that can enable significant improvement in a staggering list of conditions from MS to congestive heart failure to bone fractures (just to name a few). As I wrote then, the results from MME are so impressive that we've installed two of the treatment devices near the Tahoma Clinic.

The first few patients undergoing MME treatment have already had such significant improvement that I thought I'd tell you about them, briefly.

When one 64-year-old man with Parkinson's disease began treatment, he had extreme, uncontrolled hand tremors; stooped, unsteady, slow walking; constant drooling; and continuous back pain. His condition was so severe that he even needed assistance to position himself on the MME treatment bed.

After 179 hours of treatment, his hand tremor is still present, but more controlled. He can write and pick up small objects more easily. His walk is straighter and better coordinated. The drooling has

almost disappeared. His back pain is substantially less, and he no longer needs help positioning himself on the MME bed.

Another patient is undergoing treatment for damage to the nerve in her right femoral nerve, which affected her entire right leg from her groin to her foot. When she first came to the clinic, she said that her right leg felt like a heavy log—numb and weak. She could only walk slowly with a walker, and she couldn't climb stairs at all.

After 140 hours of MME treatment, she says that the "heavy log" feeling has decreased by more than half. She can now lift and flex her right leg without assistance while standing. She's been able to walk at times without the assistance of the walker, and has even climbed stairs with help from her son.

We also have an 82-year-old woman undergoing treatment for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). At her initial exam, she had forced, shallow inhalation, often accompanied by coughing and wheezing, and she needed to pause to catch her breath

even when walking short distances.

But after just 50 hours of MME treatment, she can inhale without difficulty, and no longer coughs or wheezes. She recently wrote to me saying: "I can breathe deeply again and am not awakened by coughing in the night. I am able to walk rapidly, and have walked three quarters of a mile on our treadmill at a 3 mile per hour rate. It's really wonderful."

And there's a good chance she'll have even further improvement with continued MME treatment.

In addition to our center near Seattle (425-738-5650, www.amri-wa.com), there are MME centers in Calgary, Alberta (800-265-1119), southern California (949-367-0877), Michigan (586-254-7711, www.amri-mi.com), North Carolina (336-492-2800, www.amri-nc.com), and Pennsylvania (717-632-0300, www.amripa.com).

If you'd like to read more about exactly what's involved in this therapy, visit any one of the websites listed above, or refer back to the April 2004 issue of *Nutrition & Healing*. JVV

Vitamin D in the news....

Putting an end to aches and pain

If you have persistent, undiagnosed pain in your muscles, joints, and bones, vitamin D might be the answer.

Late last year, Mayo Clinic researchers reported that 93 percent of 150 individuals between ages 10 and 65 who visited an inner city clinic with complaints of chronic non-specific pain had vitamin D deficiency.¹

The researchers wrote: "All patients with persistent, nonspecific musculoskeletal pain are at high risk for the consequences of unrecognized and untreated severe [vitamin D deficiency]. This risk extends to those considered at low risk for vitamin D deficiency: non-elderly, non-housebound, or non-immigrant persons of either sex."

Although the researchers did not

report what happened when these particular vitamin-D deficient individuals took supplemental vitamin D, other researchers have found that vitamin D supplementation significantly improves back pain in deficient individuals.²

I can certainly say from my own clinical observations that vitamin D definitely relieves a significant proportion of chronic, undiagnosed

Become a sore loser with this simple herpes solution

Let's face it: Herpes sores are ugly, usually painful, and always seem to happen at the very worst possible time. Not only that, but they seem to take forever to heal.

Mainstream doctors usually prescribe Acyclovir ointment (and other closely related topical medications) to treat herpes outbreaks. But new research shows that, once again, Nature has a better solution—a remedy that works faster than any of the mainstream treatments, and with fewer side effects, too.¹

Honey has long been regarded in the complimentary and alternative medicine field as one of the best natural wound healers and infection fighters because of its antimicrobial and antiviral properties. Now mainstream medicine is starting to catch on to hundreds of years of real-world proof: In a recent study published in the journal *Medical Science Monitor*, a researcher treated 16 patients suffering from recurrent herpes sores with topical application of Acyclovir cream for one attack and honey for another attack. The subjects applied the honey by soaking gauze pads in it and pressing the pads into the sore for 15 minutes, four times a day. The acyclovir ointment was applied directly to the sore (and left on) six times daily.

For herpes sores on the lips, overall healing time with honey was 43 percent better than with acyclovir. For herpes sores in the genital region, healing time was 59 percent better with honey than with acyclovir ointment.

None of the volunteers experienced any side effects with repeated applications of honey, although three patients developed local itching with the acyclovir.

Preventing break-outs in the first place

Of course, if you suffer recurrent herpes outbreaks, the best thing to do is prevent them. Sounds easier said than done, but most of the time, it's very possible.

Recurrences of any infection can be reduced or stopped altogether by removing sugar and refined carbohydrates from the diet, and identifying and eliminating food allergies; Herpes is no exception. Sometimes just these dietary measures will stop recurrences altogether, but if not, they'll nearly always at least reduce them.

Herpes virus reproduction (which leads to the outbreak of sores) is stimulated by the amino acid L-arginine. L-arginine is found in higher quantities in foods which can, like viruses, reproduce themselves (if you plant them): nuts (especially peanuts), beans, seeds,

and grains. Cutting back on foods like these that contain higher levels of L-arginine can help reduce, and, in many cases, eliminate recurrent herpes sores.

On the flip side of that coin, the amino acid L-lysine inhibits the virus reproduction, so supplementing with it can also be helpful; usually 3 to 4 grams daily are necessary.

Selenium and lithium also inhibit different aspects of herpes virus reproduction. Selenium can safely be used for preventive purposes at 400-500 micrograms daily, and lithium at 15-20 milligrams daily.

Vitamin C can shorten the duration of any viral illness. Once the virus infection becomes apparent, a bowel tolerance level (as much vitamin C as possible without causing gas or loose bowels) is a good idea.

All of these items can be used separately, or can be found in the products I formulated with Bio-Tech Pharmacal years ago—HPX and HPX2. HPX is designed for prevention; HPX2 is a bit stronger and is designed to treat actual outbreaks. These products can be found at natural food stores, compounding pharmacies, and the Tahoma Clinic Dispensary (see Resources, page 8). **JVW**

Citation available upon request and on the Nutrition & Healing website: www.wrightnewsletter.com

muscle, bone, and joint pain. So if any of these symptoms sound familiar, get your vitamin D levels checked—or simply try a safe amount of vitamin D, perhaps 2,000-3,000 IU daily. You may be pleasantly surprised by dramatic pain relief in a few weeks. **JVW**

Citations available upon request and on the Nutrition & Healing website: www.wrightnewsletter.com

insulin resistance

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or are in your family, the more likely it is you have insulin resistance. So don't let your doctor shrug you off with prescriptions for patented anti-hypertensive or statin medications. Look for a doctor skilled and knowledgeable in nutritional and

natural medicine, who can help you with the GT-IRT test and any necessary recommendations. If your test is positive, diet, exercise, and appropriate supplementation will help you control or eliminate all these problems—and may just help prevent many others, too. **JVW**

Citations available upon request and on the Nutrition & Healing website: www.wrightnewsletter.com



Staying informed—and active—in the fight for supplement freedom

Thank you to everyone who has called and written in response to the feature article regarding the European Union (EU) Directive on Dietary Supplements published in the September issue of *Dr. Wright's Nutrition & Healing*. As Dr. Wright explained in the article, this directive, which is part of a larger form of legislation called Codex Alimentarius, severely restricts access to natural health products in Europe—and the US may not be far behind.

To keep you informed on the status of the Directive—and the fight against it—we'll be printing regular updates here on page 8 of your monthly *N&H* issues, along with information on how you can stay involved.

To kick things off, many of your responses to the September article included questions asking for resources to help locate your state representatives' contact information. To locate your Senators, visit www.senate.gov. To locate your Congressmen, visit www.house.gov. Or call Capitol Advantage at (800)659-8708. You can also get help finding this information at your local library.

And don't forget to support the Alliance for Natural Health's legal action against the EU Directive. If you'd like to make a donation, checks (made payable to Alliance for Natural Health) can be sent to: **Alliance for Natural Health, Mount Manor House, 16 The Mount, Guilford (UK), Surrey GU2 4HS.**

Stay tuned for the next update, and, in the meantime keep fighting for your rights!

N&H website log-on information (NOVEMBER)

Username: november
Password: expert

Natural Response

Nixing neuropathy

"As a new subscriber to Nutrition & Healing, I am already a satisfied user of Glucotrim (as mentioned in the February 2004 issue). I have had type 2 diabetes for about 10 years, and it dropped my blood sugar readings from 180+ to 120-150.

But I have been bothered with diabetic peripheral neuropathy for the last six years or so... I'm taking several mainstream treatments for it, like Nortriptyline, Penetran Plus, and Anodyne. But I'm wondering if there are any natural therapies that could be used to improve the burning and tingling feeling that those of us with this problem experience?"

—M. J., Dallas, TX

JVW I'm glad to read that Glucotrim has helped to reduce your blood sugar significantly, as it does for so many others.

Rather than just alleviating your diabetic neuropathy, how about completely eliminating it? The Magnetic Molecular Energizer (MME) that I mentioned on page 6 has been used with great success to treat this condition. In fact, the inventor of the MME, Dr. Dean Bonlie, tells me that, in his experience, it works every time—completely curing the burning and tingling you describe. If you're interested in pursuing this type of therapy, we have an MME center near the Tahoma Clinic in Seattle, and contact information for the five other North American centers can be found in this month's issue on page 6.

Waging war on West Nile—the natural way

"I'm a Nutrition & Healing subscriber, and am very concerned (as I'm sure many other readers are) about the West Nile virus. I've found that if I take Kyolic odorless garlic, 600 milligrams per tablet, two tablets each morning, it keeps mosquitos away. Please let other readers know about this possibility.

I also haven't had a cold since I started using it, but I haven't seen any effect on my blood pressure."

—L. P., by telephone message
from Colorado

JVW Thank you for passing along this tip. I'm glad it works for you, and hope it works for other readers.

Other readers (from Alaska) have informed me that 500 to 1,000 milligrams of thiamine (vitamin B₁) taken every four to six hours keeps mosquitoes away for them. This much thiamine is safe, but may cause drowsiness in the occasional individual.

While I sincerely hope that you and everyone else can avoid the West Nile and other serious viral diseases entirely, there are several effective resources to treat them that are presently totally neglected by mainstream medicine. These include high-dose intravenous vitamin C, ultra-violet blood irradiation, intravenous ozone therapy, and several others. See next month's issue for a more complete discussion.

The text contained herein does not constitute medical advice. Nutrition & Healing advises that you consult your own physician before acting on any recommendations contained within this publication.

ALTERNATIVE HEALTH RESOURCES

American College for Advancement in Medicine (ACAM)

Phone: (800)532-3688, (949)583-7666
www.acam.org

Meridian Valley Laboratory

Phone: (425)271-8689
www.meridianvalleylab.com

Tahoma Clinic and Dispensary

Phone: (425)264-0059—for appointments and orders only
www.tahoma-clinic.com

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www.wrightnewsletter.com

Dr. Jonathan V. Wright's

NUTRITION & HEALING

Vol. 11, Issue 11 • December 2004

Kill even the deadliest "bugs" with these vaccine-less virus fighters

By Jonathan V. Wright, M.D.

In October, newspaper headlines and leading TV news stories lamented that flu vaccine availability in the USA had just been cut in half. British "authorities" shut down a major vaccine manufacturing plant due to contamination, cutting the American supply from approximately 100 million to 54 million available doses. Over the next few days, public health "authorities" bemoaned the "excess deaths" that would occur without the usual massive flu vaccination program.

The same "authorities" neglected to mention that, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) itself, last year's flu vaccine was actually ineffective. And yet, there were no reports of "excess deaths."

They also failed to bring forward any reliable statistics or studies proving that influenza vaccine actually does reduce "excess deaths." That's because... surprise...such data doesn't exist!

But worst of all, these same public health "authorities" give us the impression that vaccination is the only thing we can do to prevent the flu, and that if flu becomes serious or life-threatening, there is no effective treatment at all. So every year, they try to stampede us all into lining up and submitting ourselves and our children to a procedure that, if it

wasn't advocated by "authorities," would be categorized as "faith healing." (By the way, I have nothing at all against faith healing. Sometimes, faith healing works! But it just cannot be presented as hard science.)

The truth is, there are effective treatments, even for the worst

"You won't find them at your doctor's office, and, unfortunately, you won't find them at your local hospital either. Yet every one of them has a track record that traces back to the first half of the 20th century."

cases of flu or other "dreaded" viral illnesses: West Nile, SARS, "bird flu"—you name the virus, and I can assure you that effective treatments exist.

Over 50 years of natural virus-killing success

The problem is that none of these treatments are patentable, so you won't find them at your local mainstream medical doctor's office, and, unfortunately, you won't find them at your local hospital either. Yet every one of them has a track record that

traces back to the first half of the 20th century.

I do agree with public health "authorities" on just one point: Prevention of viral illness is far preferable to treatment. It's also considerably less expensive. But since we've gone over virus prevention many times before, this month, I'll just focus on a few of the most effective treatments for very serious viral illness.

C-ing your way to recovery

Few viruses have been more dreaded than polio. Polio killed, crippled, and maimed. It mostly affected small children, which made the fear even worse. It's one of the few epidemic illnesses for which vaccination may actually have done more good than harm. But even during the worst polio years, Dr. Fred Klenner of North Carolina was reversing polio with "massive" doses of intravenous vitamin C. In one medical journal article, he reported that children with progressing paralysis due to polio had their paralysis completely reversed with high-dose intravenous vitamin C.

Dr. Klenner also reported successful treatment of six cases of viral encephalitis (viral infection/inflammation of the brain) and many other viral diseases with the same treatment.

(continued on next page)

Dr. Jonathan V. Wright's

NUTRITION & HEALING

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Our mission:

Nutrition & Healing is dedicated to helping you keep yourself and your family healthy by the safest and most effective means possible. Every month, you'll get information about diet, vitamins, minerals, herbs, natural hormones, natural energies, and other substances and techniques to prevent and heal illness, while prolonging your healthy life span.

A graduate of Harvard University and the University of Michigan Medical School (1969), Dr. Jonathan V. Wright has been practicing natural and nutritional medicine at the Tahoma Clinic in Kent, Washington, since 1973. Based on enormous volumes of library and clinical research, along with tens of thousands of clinical consultations, he is exceptionally well-qualified to bring you a unique blending of the most up-to-date information and the best and still most effective natural therapies developed by preceding generations.

Nutrition & Healing cannot improve on these famous words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The inalienable right to life must include the right to care for one's own life. The inalienable right to liberty must include the right to choose whatever means we wish to care for ourselves. In addition to publishing the best of information about natural health care, *Nutrition & Healing* urges its readers to remember their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and freedom of choice in health care. This information is published to help in the effort to exercise these inalienable rights, and to warn of ever-present attempts of both government and private organizations to restrict them.

All material in this publication is provided for information only and may not be construed as medical advice or instruction. No action should be taken based solely on the contents of this publication; instead, readers should consult appropriate health professionals on any matter relating to their health and well-being. The information and opinions provided in this publication are believed to be accurate and sound, based on the best judgment available to the authors, but readers who fail to consult with appropriate health authorities assume the risk of any injuries. The publisher is not responsible for errors or omissions.

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vaccine-less virus fighters (continued from page 1)

In the 1980s, I worked with a man who was on the University Hospital list for liver transplantation because of a severe case of viral hepatitis. He came to the Tahoma Clinic looking for an alternative. Because of the hepatitis, his blood tests for liver enzymes were very high, as were his "viral titers" (the concentration of the virus per milliliter of fluid). He was very fatigued, couldn't work, and his skin was yellow-orange all over with jaundice.

We put together a treatment program with high-dose intravenous vitamin C as the cornerstone. At first, he received it three times a week. On days he didn't have intravenous vitamin C, he took maximum-tolerable doses of buffered vitamin C orally (up to 60 grams total daily), along with digestive enzymes, which increased his bowel tolerance for the vitamin.

As he improved, we gradually reduced the frequency of the high-dose intravenous vitamin C. After two to three months, he was able to stop the intravenous vitamin C treatment entirely, relying solely on oral doses. After six months, his fatigue and jaundice were gone. Blood tests showed normal liver enzymes. His viral titers were negative. Basically, he didn't have hepatitis anymore.

Of course, the university doctors couldn't believe the results, so they repeated the tests, but the reports came back the same. At his last visit to the hospital, he was told that he must not have had hepatitis in the first place, that his tests that diagnosed it in the first place must have been a lab error, because "everyone knows" that hepatitis can't be cured with vitamin C.

Just two or three years ago, I saw him at a local natural food store, and he told me he's still doing quite well.

Rally your body's defenses

High-dose intravenous vitamin C can also be an effective treatment for SARS, West Nile, bird flu, serious cases of "regular" flu—in fact, any virus at all. But it's not actually a "virus killer." Instead, high doses "rally" all of the body's defense systems until the viral invader is finally subdued.

Mainstream medicine "experts" can't believe a "simple vitamin" can do all this, but if they took a look back at their old medical school genetics textbooks, they would realize why it works. Nearly all animals make their own vitamin C (in this case, called ascorbic acid or ascorbate) internally. When an ascorbate-producing animal is infected with any virus at all, its liver (or kidneys, in birds) goes into "overdrive" and starts producing massive quantities of ascorbate. All that suddenly produced ascorbate activates the immune system, supports the adrenals against the stress, quenches inflammation, and, in general, supports all the animal's healing functions, greatly increasing its chances of survival.

But humans and a very few other species can't make their own ascorbate. When you are infected by a virus, your body tries to produce more ascorbate, but it can't.

While swallowing vitamin C can do the job part way, only high-dose intravenous vitamin C can duplicate the normal response that most animals' bodies have to serious viral infection. And while it won't cure every infection, it greatly increases your odds of survival.

Shedding some light on serious infections

In the 1930s and 1940s, literally tens of thousands of infections of all kinds—viral, bacterial, fungal—were successfully treated with ultraviolet blood irradiation (UVBI). During those two decades, especially the 1940s, dozens of reports about successful UVBI treatments appeared in a wide variety of medical journals. Some of the successful applications occurred in the most dreaded viruses of the time, including polio.

In UVBI, blood is drawn from a vein, mixed with heparin (a natural human anti-coagulant), exposed to ultraviolet light, and then re-infused into the patient. The light kills the virus in the blood so that it's "clean" when it re-enters the patient's circulation. The procedure is repeated several times, depending on the patient's response.

UVBI has an incredible safety record. In 1941, Dr. George Miley reported "We wish to state unequivocally that in more than 6,000 ultraviolet blood irradiations administered during the past four years at the Shadyside Hospital in Pittsburgh and at the Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia we have seen no deleterious effects following the use of this method, either from a clinical or laboratory standpoint."

This therapy even works on viruses as serious and potentially deadly as HIV and its resulting condition, AIDS. In his book *Into the Light*, William Campbell Douglass II, M.D., details treatment

of patients with severe, terminal AIDS at an African clinic. While some patients died despite UVBI treatment, others recovered—a remarkable occurrence for a condition that, without UVBI, has a 100 percent mortality rate.

But UVBI suffers from several "handicaps." While it can be very effective, it's unpatentable, no one knows exactly how it works, and it's out of favor with mainstream medical "authorities." While mainstream physicians will gladly use treatments whose mechanism of action isn't known if their "authorities" approve, most will hide behind the "we don't know how it works" excuse if those same "authorities" disapprove of a particular treatment.

Into the Light contains an enormous amount of information about UVBI treatment of a wide variety of illness, as well as hundreds of citations from medical journals. It's available through the Tahoma Clinic Dispensary, some natural food stores and compounding pharmacies, and on-line sources, including the Rhino Publishing website (www.rhinopublish.com).

The equal-opportunity germ killer

Ozone therapy was developed in Germany in the early 20th century. Although it can be given directly intravenously, it's usually given like UVBI: Blood is withdrawn from the patient, mixed with heparin, then ozone, and re-infused. Treatments are repeated according to response.

Ozone doesn't discriminate. It's an "equal-opportunity" germ killer. Viruses, bacteria, fungi, protozoa—ozone doesn't care: It kills 'em all. Research has shown that ozone can sterilize donated blood to completely prevent transmission of viral and other infectious diseases to blood recipients.

In the U.S., alternative practitioners have used ozone therapy to effectively treat life-threatening viruses (as well as many other conditions) for many decades. However, the treatments have been done "quietly," without publicity, since *los Federales* have made threats (and occasional raids) against practitioners and clinics who use it.

Of course, ozone must be used carefully; breathing it can be very damaging to the lungs. But safety procedures for the intravenous use of ozone were worked out long ago. Serious side effects from ozone therapy are possible, but rare.

Finding treatment when you need it

Ironically, your local hospital is the very last place to look for these potentially life-saving treatments for SARS, West Nile virus, "bird flu," a very serious case of "regular" flu, or any other "dreaded virus."

Instead, check with a practitioner skilled and knowledgeable in natural and nutritional medicine. (You'll find a list of organizations that can help you find one in your area on page 8, in the Alternative Health Resources box.)

It's likely that he or she is already using high-dose intravenous vitamin C. You may even be surprised to learn that UVBI or ozone therapy is available there, too, just not advertised. And if it isn't, the practitioner will very likely be able to refer you to a local resource.

It's a good idea to do some investigating now, so that if you should ever need one of these therapies in the future, you know exactly where you can get it. Being prepared in advance will save you valuable time, energy, and possibly even your life. **JVW**

One-time treatment can cure arthritis for good

Long-time *Nutrition & Healing* readers may remember our interview with former National Institutes of Health researcher Harry Diehl, published in August 1996. Although Harry had no professional degrees, he was an accomplished chemist and became intrigued by the observation that mice don't get degenerative arthritis (also known as osteoarthritis, or OA). Working in his home lab, he analyzed literally thousands of mice, finally isolating a type of fatty acid called cetyl-myristoleate (CMO) not found in rats, which do get arthritis, or humans. He invented and patented the first process to duplicate CMO synthetically, creating bio-identical CMO.

6 years pain-free

When he tried the bio-identical CMO on arthritic rats, they were cured. But he couldn't interest any patent-medicine companies in CMO. So he "let it go" until he developed arthritis himself at age 80. Here's an excerpt from Harry's own account of his experience:

"I thought, here's this process I found years ago just laying there, nobody wants it, so why not cook myself up a batch? So I did. I took about a gram of the cetyl-myristoleate and about 10 ccs of DMSO and rubbed it into my hands a little at a time over 10 days. I said, man, I'm feeling better! Then it's out of my knees, my heels...the pain's gone from everywhere! I had a lifelong headache nearly, and that disappeared. Hasn't been back since. I've been going to the hospital once or twice a year with bronchitis; that quit, too."

"On January 1st it will be six years since I took any cetyl-myristoleate at all, and I haven't had a pain anywhere, or any headaches or bronchitis since. My

doctor was so impressed he wrote a letter and sent it to a pharmaceutical journal, and they published my animal research in 1994."

New research supports natural arthritis treatment

This year, a new report on a human trial of "cetylated fatty acids" and arthritis was published. At the Human Performance Laboratory of the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, two groups of 20 individuals with

"Harry used this treatment only one time and never needed it again. He made it for friends, who had the same experience."

osteoarthritis were given either topical cetylated fatty acid (CFA) applications or a placebo application twice daily for 30 days.

Those in the cetylated fatty acid group had significant improvement compared to the placebo group. According to the researchers, "Use of a CFA topical cream is an effective treatment for improving knee range of motion, ability to ascend/descend stairs, ability to rise from sitting, walk and sit down, and unilateral balance."¹

Cetylated fatty acids are a group of fatty acids that include CMO, but the compound used in the new study is not exactly the same as Harry Diehl's CMO. It's possible that it may work even better, but only a direct comparison trial will tell us that. If such a comparison is ever done, I'm putting my money on Harry Diehl's original CMO.

According to Harry's studies in animals, the fatty acid cetyl-myristoleate (CMO) was the most

active component of the factor he discovered to be protecting mice from arthritis. Until controlled research shows otherwise, I'll continue to believe him.

Although Harry amassed considerable experience with individual cases, there was no money available for expensive human trials. No patent medication company would do it. So Harry and his family raised some money, and started producing CMO themselves.

The main "problem" was the cost. As Harry himself said: "I should warn you, it's expensive, the myristoleic acid I buy for the final step is high." With a price tag of several hundred dollars in 1996, many couldn't afford it. Fortunately, the cost has come down considerably since then.

Complete relief in less than 12 weeks

Harry Diehl isn't with us anymore, but his daughter and son-in-law continue his work and company, EHP Products. Harry later added cetylmyristate to his original single-component CMO, and re-named the combination Myristin®. Due to production difficulties, the original topical version of CMO is *not* presently available, although it may return within the next year. For now, Myristin comes in capsule form, which appears to be just as effective.

It's available at natural food stores, compounding pharmacies, and the Tahoma Clinic Dispensary (though I have no financial affiliation with EHP Products). I usually recommend taking six capsules of Myristin daily for 80 days. If it hasn't worked by then, it's probably isn't going to. But it

(continued on page 7)

School lunches get a healthy overhaul

All too often, actions of various branches of government threaten your health. Whether it's Congress, the European Food Supplements Directive, or just FDA-as-usual, they never seem to get it right. Which is why I'm so pleased to report that the Seattle School Board recently bucked the trend and has, for once, made a good, health-promoting decision.

Here's the headline from a press release published late this past summer:

"Sales of Sodas and Junk Food Banned on School Campuses"

According to the release, the Seattle School District has instituted new policies that "will ban sales of all foods containing high levels of sugar and fat, improve the quality and appeal of school meal programs, and prohibit contracts with beverage vendors for 'exclusive pouring rights.'"

But the Seattle School Board's

new policies go even further, quite possibly the furthest for any large government school district anywhere. They "also give direction to the school meal program and others to offer fresh, local, organic, non-genetically-modified, non-irradiated, unprocessed food, whenever feasible."

What a pleasant surprise! Organic, non-irradiated, non-genetically modified, unprocessed, healthful food in school cafeterias? Truly a revolutionary thought, considering that only a generation ago *los Federales* declared ketchup to be a vegetable for purposes of school lunches.

These and other policies will be phased into Seattle schools over the 2005 school year, as exclusive contracts with Coca-Cola and other junk-food companies expire.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Seattle School Board and all the children—and their parents—who will benefit from these new modifi-

cations! I'm not a fan of any "government schools," but as long as we're forced to pay taxes to support them, some of that tax money may as well go for health-promoting policies and procedures.

If your children or grandchildren attend a government school (or any other school, for that matter) that's still feeding them processed, sugary food, and selling them "soft drinks," and other junk from vending machines, let the school officials know about the new Seattle School District policies. Attend open school board meetings and suggest a move toward a similar school lunch program.

And, once again, write to your local government representatives and let them know that you want them to stand up for the health of the children in your life. After all, they deserve access to nutrition at school too. **JVW**

Protect your brain from Parkinson's

We're hearing more and more about "early onset" Parkinson's disease. While no one knows for sure what causes Parkinson's—early-onset or otherwise—it's strongly suspected that environmental neurotoxins may play a role. But one central feature of Parkinson's disease is known for sure: Whatever causes it does so in part by gradually killing dopamine-producing cells in a key area of the brain.

Research shows that the mineral lithium offers very strong protective effects for nerve cells, including protection from a wide variety of **neurotoxins**. And recently, research has indicated that lithium may also help prevent Parkinson's disease by protecting those dopamine-

producing cells.

Israeli researchers pre-treated mice with varying quantities of lithium and then gave them injections of MPTP, a neurotoxin used to induce "experimental" Parkinson's disease in animals. They found a direct relationship between levels of lithium given to the mice and the degree of dopamine production; the highest quantity of lithium prevented the MPTP from decreasing dopamine production at all. In mice not pre-treated with lithium, MPTP also decreased levels of a marker protein for brain cell health called Bcl-2; mice pre-treated with lithium were protected from this decrease.

Although the research results in animals are very strong, lithium isn't patentable, so it'll be years (if ever) before similar research is funded in people. Since most mainstream doctors need that "human proof," you'll probably need to work with a physician skilled and knowledgeable in natural medicine if you want to pursue this form of therapy.

One other important note about this particular research: While low dose lithium is safe and very likely protective against the low levels of neurotoxins commonly encountered, the amounts of lithium used in this study were considerably higher. These higher quantities were

(continued on page 8)

Even more all-natural tools for fighting arthritis pain —and they taste great too!

By Kerry Bone

As Dr. Wright mentioned earlier, the fatty acid cetyl-myristoleate (CMO) can be a very effective treatment for osteoarthritis (OA). Building on his article, I thought this month I'd take a few moments to go over some other simple techniques for alleviating this widespread condition.

A mini-heart attack may be behind your arthritis pain

Osteoarthritis is the most common human disease, but it is one that is still poorly understood. The conventional approach is to treat the symptoms with pain-killers and anti-inflammatory drugs, but these treatments often carry side effects and do not alter the progression of the condition. OA is a degenerative disease, where initial short-term responses of the body translate into chronic changes that eventually lead to joint failure. Like all degenerative disorders it is best prevented, but in order to do this, we need to know more about its causes.

The commonly accepted risk factors for OA are age, obesity, joint injury, genetics, and gender.¹⁻³

A recent study found that OA is more widespread in the bodies of sufferers than has previously been recognized. Essentially, this means that OA is a systemic disorder, and isn't just confined to those joints that are injured or subject to excessive wear and tear.⁴

One insight into this dilemma has come from Australian scientists who found that disturbances in circulation are a driving force in the chronic degeneration that occurs in OA.^{5,6} Basically, the thicker your blood, the more likely you are to get OA. But before you start reaching for the aspirin, I want to emphasize

that there are many other factors involved in "thick blood" than what aspirin can address. More about that in a minute.

These scientists suggest that the catalyst causing OA is a small clot that occurs in the microcirculation supplying the bone near the joint. This is just like a microscopic heart attack.^{7,8} And like a heart attack, the same risk factors, which all lead to "thick" blood, are involved: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and so on.

There is also a theory among some naturopaths and herbalists that high levels of acidic waste products (like uric acid) in the body can accelerate joint destruction.

Simple, great-tasting solutions for relieving your pain

Apart from lifestyle changes (avoid being overweight and causing excess stress to your joints), there are some key herbs and foods that can help manage and even prevent OA. These carry a much lower risk of side effects than conventional anti-inflammatories. I have outlined the laboratory and clinical evidence for the pain- and inflammation-relieving effects of willow bark, Boswellia, and nettle leaf in previous issues (you can search for them on-line by signing on to the *Nutrition & Healing* website using the log-on information listed on page 8). Another important anti-inflammatory herb that has been extensively investigated in clinical trials is devil's claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*).

A recent review found 20 clinical trials that demonstrated the value of devil's claw in various chronic inflammatory conditions, such as OA and chronic back pain.⁹ Doses were typically extracts containing 2

to 5 g of root per day.

Another favorite herb of mine for OA is celery seed. Not only is it anti-inflammatory, it also thins the blood and helps clear acidic waste from the body through its action on the kidneys (at least according to traditional herbal thinking). All these actions make it ideal for OA. In my clinical experience, 3 to 4 g of seed per day, or an extract made from that amount, is the most effective dose for relieving OA.

Fruits, especially cherries, help combat the acidic waste build-up that can exacerbate OA. This has been backed up by a recent clinical trial, which found that fresh cherries significantly dropped levels of uric acid in the blood of healthy volunteers.¹⁰

In addition to celery seed, I also recommend incorporating turmeric, ginger, and raw garlic into your diet. These are all blood-thinning herbs, which will help keep that microcirculation to your joints flowing smoothly, preventing the "mini heart attack" that can lead to OA. They're easy enough to add to your meals, since they're all commonly available in every supermarket.

Talk to your doctor (or a skilled herbalist or naturopath) about incorporating these all-natural—and great-tasting—tools into your OA treatment program. Along with the CMO discussed on page 4 and the other techniques covered in *Nutrition & Healing* over the years, you can rest easy—and comfortably—knowing that you have all the information you need to get safe, effective relief from your arthritis pain. **KB**

Citations available upon request and on the *Nutrition & Healing* website: www.wrightnewsletter.com

What you need to know about the monkey virus infecting millions of Americans

Between 1955 and 1963, 98 million Americans were each given repeated doses of a monkey virus called SV40. SV40 not only causes cancer in animals, but, in 1992, a National Institutes of Health researcher, Michele Carbone, found evidence that 60 percent of human mesotheliomas (cancer that occurs in a person's body cavities, like the chest or abdomen) contained SV40.

Despite mainstream denial, 25 subsequent studies have confirmed the presence of SV40 in human mesotheliomas, and 16 other studies have found SV40 in human brain cancer, bone cancer, and lymphoma.

So why were 98 million Americans (and probably hundreds of millions of Asians, Europeans, and Africans) given doses of SV40? Because between 1955 and 1963, both the Salk and the Sabin polio virus vaccines were grown in rhesus monkey kidney cells, which have been called "sewers" of monkey viruses, including SV40. So those 98 million Americans were given SV40 virus in each and every dose of polio vaccine.

Doctored "research" confuses—and covers up—the real issue

"Authorities" haven't just kept silent about SV40. First, they tried to suppress the research and punish the researchers. When that didn't work anymore, they came up with "research" of their own saying that SV40 doesn't really cause cancer.

When the results of Michele

Carbone's study were published in a non-government sponsored scientific journal, the NIH, of course, declined to publicize them and instead developed epidemiologic evidence that found "no correlation" between increased cancer rates and the polio vaccine.

Another government-related group, the Institute of Medicine, reviewed all published epidemiologic studies on the same topic and declared them "inconclusive." But in their book *The Virus and the Vaccine: the True Story of A Cancer-Causing Monkey Virus, Contaminated Polio Vaccine, and the Millions of Americans Exposed*, authors Debbie Bookchin and Jim Schumacher point out that the rate of SV40-positive cancers are highest in countries that used the most SV40 contaminated Salk vaccine, including the U.S., UK, and Italy.

As this book documents, in 1959 an NIH vaccine safety researcher, Dr. Bernice Eddy, was among the first to present evidence that the polio vaccines were contaminated with SV40. As a result, she was forbidden to speak about or publish her work, and her vaccine regulatory duties were removed. Even her laboratory was taken away. Unfortunately, this is not at all unusual when a scientist finds evidence that contradicts the "scientific party line."

The good news is that in 1963 the production of American polio

vaccine was "switched" away from rhesus monkey kidneys to African green monkey kidneys, which don't contain the SV40 virus (but may contain other viruses). But Russian polio vaccines, given to those hundreds of millions of Asians, Europeans, and Africans, continued to be grown on SV40 contaminated monkey kidneys until the 1980s.

The monkey business may be over, but think twice about vaccines

SV40 in polio vaccine. Mercury in children's vaccines. HIV virus spread by the World Health Organization's smallpox vaccination program in Africa (a scandal well-known to the European press but little reported here in the USA). Children permanently brain-damaged by the "pertussis" vaccine (the "P" in "DPT"). The list doesn't stop there, but that's enough bad news for now.

The tetanus shot does appear relatively safe, and the presently available polio vaccine is probably OK, but I still recommend thinking long and hard—and doing a lot of reading and research—before subjecting your children to any other vaccinations.

For further information about vaccines and vaccination, read Jim Schumacher and Debbie Bookchin's book, as well as *Vaccination by Vera Scheibner, Ph.D., and Vaccines: Are They Really Safe and Effective?* by Neil Miller. **JVW**

one-time arthritis treatment

(continued from page 4)

works much more often than not, providing total or significant relief for arthritis symptoms.

As Harry said, "It does its job,

and then most of us don't need it any more." Harry used CMO only that one time, and didn't continue taking it. He made it for friends, who had the same experience.

I've asked Tahoma Clinic patients

to try it, and although it doesn't work for everyone, the majority of those who've tried it have had substantial or complete relief. **JVW**

Citation available upon request and on the Nutrition & Healing website: www.wrightnewsletter.com

Natural Response



SOS: Save Our Supplements

"I have been concerned about the European Union Directive on Dietary Supplements for some time and have written all 100 US Senators about my concern on this matter..."

It appears to me that the time has come for the U.S. legislative body to realize that they are to represent their constituents as was originally intended. We 'health nuts' are certainly not in favor of this Directive. Elected officials should realize that...My hope is that the public realizes this Directive, if passed, would do away with a freedom of choice. If one freedom of choice is taken away, it is then easy for others to be taken away. We must not let this happen.

Finally, this Directive actually eliminates competitors of the pharmaceutical industry. This country became great because of freedom of choice and competition among businesses. Eliminating either one is anti-American. No other business in the world can eliminate competition with governmental blessings! Only the pharmaceutical industries! One thing is certain...I am probably not 'politically correct' in my notes to Congress.

—R.L.N., Mound, Minnesota

"The September newsletter I just received from you was upsetting—no need to say how important our supplements are to us, as you very well know.

We do not have a computer so

can't [go on-line to find the website that lists the address to] mail a check... Please next month, put some addresses and phone numbers in for us 'oldies' who don't have a computer.

—M. S., North Branford, Connecticut

JVW: Thank you to R.L.N., M.S., and many more of you for taking the time to write—and for donating to the effort to stop the European Food Supplements Directive in Europe before it ever has a chance to reach the USA.

Please continue to write, fax, telephone, and e-mail your Senators and U.S. Representative to support H.R. 1146, the American Sovereignty Restoration Act, which would restore our United States Constitution as the supreme law of our land, not World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and "Directives."

Tell your senators to oppose S.722, the Dietary Supplement Safety Act, and tell your Congressmen to vote against H.R. 3377, the Dietary Supplement Access and Awareness

Act. Either one would repeal a significant part of the health care freedom we regained with the "DSHEA" legislation of 1993. To find the names of your state Senators visit www.senate.gov. To locate contact information for your congressmen, visit www.house.gov. Those of you without computers can get help locating this information at your local library, or you can call Capitol Advantage at (800)659-8708.

Contributions to the legal case to stop the European Food Supplements Directive, already successful in the "first round" in European courts, can be made out (in any currency) to the Alliance for Natural Health and mailed to:

Alliance for Natural Health
Mount Manor House
16 The Mount
Guildford, Surrey, GU2 4HS
United Kingdom

The text contained herein does not constitute medical advice. Nutrition & Healing advises that you consult your own physician before acting on any recommendations contained within this publication.

Protect your brain

(continued from page 6)

necessary to offset the deliberate injection of MPTP, but if you have Parkinson's disease or are starting to get it, **do not use anything but low doses of lithium without consultation and supervision by a physician skilled and knowledgeable in nutritional and natural medicine!**

For a much more complete discussion of lithium and brain cell protection, as well as lithium safety, see *Nutrition & Healing* for August and September 2003. See the box below for guidance to on-line access to these and many other back issues. **JVW**

ALTERNATIVE HEALTH RESOURCES

American College for Advancement in Medicine (ACAM)
Phone: (800)532-3688, (949)583-7666
www.acam.org

American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP)
Phone: (703)610-9037, (877)969-2267
www.naturopathic.org

Tahoma Clinic and Dispensary
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www.tahoma-clinic.com

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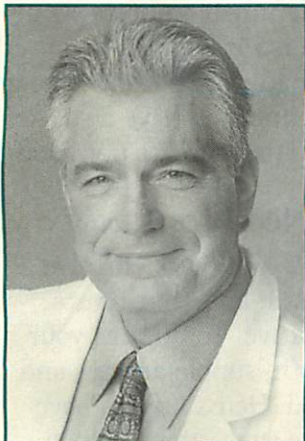
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Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

September 2007



Dear Friend,

I've noticed an interesting trend in "natural" medicine. Many of my colleagues have fallen into the same trap that conventional doctors are in: Too often, their response to a patient's medical concern is to recommend one pill or another. The biggest difference seems to be that the "natural" pill is green, while the conventional one could be pink, or blue, or purple. It's an attitude I call "green allopathy," meaning that while the tools may be different, the mindset is much the same.

There's a very logical reason behind all this: When you're uncomfortable, you want to feel better—*now*—and you almost don't care what it takes. (Believe me, drug companies are acutely aware of this basic instinct. It's how they make their billions.) You'll notice that I, too, recommend a variety of supplements from time to time in the pages of *Naturally Well Today*. But there's an important difference: Naturopathic physicians don't stop with the pills. Yes, a pill might provide quick short-term relief, but often the long-term solution requires more in-depth knowledge, self-care, and persistence. Simply put, you can't always buy your way out of trouble. This month's stories provide good examples of health concerns that can be resolved by knowing the cause and applying that knowledge.

Here's what you need to know this month.

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Living Well

Avoiding a Stroke Isn't Just Luck

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, every month more than 50,000 Americans experience a stroke. That's every *month*. A third of those people die as a direct result of the stroke, and another third are permanently disabled. Want to get out of the line of fire? *Good idea*. The factors that lead to stroke tend to be silent and sneaky, so you could be at risk and not even know it. Fortunately, that's not a problem, because those risk factors are easy to neutralize through natural means that are great for your total health—whether you're a stroke candidate or not. You've got everything to gain and nothing to lose!

Different Strokes

About 88 percent of all strokes are *ischemic* strokes. This means that the blood supply to a section of your brain has been suddenly slammed shut. The process starts years earlier, with *peripheral artery disease* (PAD)—the condition I wrote about in last month's NWT—in which arteries elsewhere in your body start getting gradually gunked up with inflammation byproducts, oxidized cholesterol patches, and clots. The actual stroke happens when a piece of that gunk comes loose, gets swept along in your bloodstream, and clogs an artery in your head. The bigger the clogged artery, the worse the potential damage from the stroke.

Risk factors for ischemic stroke include high blood pressure, a history of atrial fibrillation, birth control pills, postmenopausal hormone treatments, and anything that causes inflammation anywhere in your body (see the box on the next page). Inflammation increases your blood levels of caustic chemicals such as



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homocysteine, interleukin, and C-reactive protein (CRP), and, because those inflammatory chemicals are in your blood, your arteries are the first to get burned. The gunky plaque that puts you in line for an ischemic stroke gets deposited over the burns.

The other major kind of stroke is *hemorrhagic*. This means that instead of a blockage, there's a rupture in one of the brain's vessels. It's the result of the thinning and brittleness in the gunked-up areas of your arteries, which are supposed to be elastic. Every time your heart beats, the pressure wave stresses those brittle areas. It's like riding on bald tires—eventually they're going to blow. How bad it is depends on where the bleed is, how big it is, and how long it takes for the bleeding to stop.

The risk factors for hemorrhagic stroke include many of the same ones that cause ischemic stroke, plus an intake of more than two alcoholic drinks or more than five caffeinated drinks per day.

Do You Feel Lucky?

Conventional prevention and treatment for stroke is a real gamble. How bad your stroke is depends on whether you get to the hospital fast enough, get diagnosed accurately, and get treated within 3 hours with a powerful clot-busting injection of tPA (*tissue plasminogen activator*). If all those ducks are lined up for you, tPA will break up your clot before your brain tissue is damaged past the point of recovery. Your subsequent progress depends on how big the damaged area is, where it is, how much healing it can do, and whether other parts of your brain can take over. Now here's the big gamble: What if it was a hemorrhagic stroke instead of an ischemic one? The clot-buster won't save you then; it'll kill you.

Let's take this scenario out of the emergency room and bring it home. Say your physician thinks you're at risk for a stroke. He or she puts you on

WARNING! FLAMMABLE ARTERIES

Lifestyle choices are known to cause arterial inflammation:

Smoking, bad diet, inadequate antioxidants, obesity, insulin resistance, lack of exercise, toxins, and stress—including emotional stress.

some kind of "blood thinner," which impairs your blood's ability to clot. You'll definitely notice a significant increase in bruising, even without any significant bumps or bangs. That's bad enough, but what if you take that preventive stuff and you have a stroke anyway—a *hemorrhagic* one? Trust me, it's not good.

The No-Brainer You Need to Know

Preventing strokes is easier and more effective than dealing with the aftermath, and your *future* prospects are a lot more attractive. To do this, your body needs two things: smooth, supple arteries and cool, clean, free-flowing blood. Here's how to have both, naturally. The first three suggestions here are things that will promote your overall health, actions that'll give you benefits no matter what your risk of stroke. The final three suggestions are specifically for those people who do have a higher risk for stroke.

- To start with, review my August 2007 article "Arteries Affect More Than Just Your Heart," and follow the treatment recommendations. They'll help you have wide-open, flexible, inflammation-free arteries.
- Eat a diet of fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and fish. Oily cold-water fish such as mackerel, salmon, and sardines contain natural anti-inflammatories and healthy blood thinners. Plus, eating these fish makes any plaque you may already have less likely to break off in dangerous clumps. Taking a quality fish oil supplement is fine, but I still recommend you eat

DR. MARCUS LAUX

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Dr. Laux works closely with Natural Medica, a subsidiary of Healthy Directions, LLC, developing his unique formulations that supply many of the hard-to-find nutrients he recommends. Dr. Laux is compensated by Natural Medica on the sales of these nutritional supplements and health products, which allows him to continue devoting his life to researching innovative, effective health solutions.

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One Hot Cure for Diabetes

Conventional doctors will tell you that diabetes is a controllable disease. Doctors who practice natural medicine will tell you that it's a *curable* disease. Conventional medicine will say that, if you had been diagnosed with diabetes, and don't have it now, then there was a misdiagnosis—or a “spontaneous remission.” Natural medicine will say, “See? We said so.”

The old story about **type 1** diabetes, which shows up before adulthood, is that for some unknown reason your body's immune system goes haywire and starts attacking the insulin-secreting *islet cells* in your own pancreas. This antibody-antigen struggle kills the islet cells, creates inflammation, and suppresses pancreatic function—making you dependent on insulin for life.

The old story about **type 2** diabetes—supposedly a completely different disease—is that you get it from eating too many sweets. This makes your body tissues less responsive to insulin, so your islet cells have to produce more and eventually wear out. If you cut out the sweet stuff and lose weight, you *might* be able to control—not cure—your diabetes with oral medicine; otherwise you, too, will need insulin.

Now, new research pokes big holes in those tired old stories. If you need new proof that we can heal from just about anything on our own—including diabetes, no matter which type it is—this new information hands it to you on a silver platter.

Breakthrough #1

Canadian researchers looking at pancreatic tissue from type 1 diabetics noticed a higher-than-normal number of sensory nerve fibers woven around the islet cells. Those fibers normally secrete a neurotransmitter (*substance P*) that tells your islet cells to release insulin. The team discovered that the nerves were secreting very little substance P. Furthermore, the lack of substance P was creating inflammation in the islet cells. To try and shut down those malfunctioning nerve fibers, the team injected capsaicin (from hot chili peppers) directly into the pancreas of lab mice that had type 1 diabetes. The *very next day*, those islet cells were behaving normally—their inflammation had subsided and they were secreting insulin as though nothing had ever been wrong.

Next, the team injected similar mice with substance P. Again, overnight reversal of the diabetes. Then, they did the experiments on mice with type 2

oily fish two or three times per week, to make sure you get all the healthy benefits that might not be in questionable supplements. You'll get the most benefit out of baked or broiled fish.

- Get your blood pressure and cholesterol levels down naturally. If you've cleaned up your diet and lowered your stress to sane levels and you still need help with blood pressure, you can find more information in the July 2006 and May 2007 issues of *Naturally Well Today*.
- Ladies, avoid conventional hormone treatments. Birth control pills are stroke promoters, even for women who don't smoke. There's still squabbling about hormone replacement therapy (HRT), but a load of evidence indicates that it increases your risk of fatal or disabling stroke by 50 percent.
- If you need a blood thinner until natural treatments can restore open pipework, talk with your physician about natural blood thinners, such as fish oil as mentioned above and ginkgo extract—they're safer than drugs and keep your blood flowing without turning you into a “bleeder.” However, if you've ever had a hemorrhagic stroke, don't take blood thinners—natural or otherwise—without first consulting your physician. And be advised, while a daily baby aspirin *is cheaper and milder than Plavix or Aggrenox*, it's still a powerful drug. Warning: Some studies suggest that if you're over 70, aspirin may significantly increase your risk of bleeding.
- Take vinpocetine. It opens up blood vessels, for better flow. Well regarded as a “neuroprotective” compound, its effects on the arteries make it a rational treatment for stroke prevention. Vinpocetine was developed from a compound found in the periwinkle plant (*Vinca minor*). You can find it in health food stores. I generally start patients with documented arterial disease on 2 mg twice a week, working them up to as much as 5 mg every other day if necessary. It can cause mild nausea, so take it slow.

If you're aware and proactive, stroke can be a non-issue for you. Living your life in balance is powerful protection against stroke, and it makes everything work better—your body, your mind, your life!

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diabetes—supposedly a completely different disease—and got the same response. The inflammation in the islet cells cleared up, and the cells started cranking out insulin normally, plus the body tissues that had become insulin resistant actually responded better to insulin. The shots not only turned the islet cells back on, they also normalized metabolism.

Breakthrough #2

Conventional medicine's perspective on diabetes is pretty simple-minded: Insulin's job is to regulate your blood sugar levels, period, and your insulin levels are governed strictly by your blood sugar levels. In truth, insulin regulates a number of body functions, in ways that are often overlooked—including appetite, brain function, reproduction, and the growth and development of embryos. And there are lots of things that regulate your insulin secretion.

For example, chemicals called *GLP-1* and *GIP*, which are secreted by your gut when you eat, are “middlemen” that relay the message to your islet cells to get ready to secrete insulin as soon as your blood sugar gets to a certain level. In healthy people, 50 to 70 percent of their insulin response is triggered by these compounds. These same compounds promote the growth of new islet cells, and slow down the natural decline of existing islet cells. A similar role is played by a protein called *IRS2*, which tells insulin where to focus first: on your muscles, liver, blood sugar levels, body weight, the growth of your brain, et cetera. *IRS2* also regulates the size of your population of islet cells. These examples are ironclad evidence that your body is designed to *protect and heal itself* from diabetes, by making sure you have enough islet cells to meet your insulin needs.

Awakenings

So, now you know. Being diabetic doesn't mean your islet cells are dead and gone, even if you have type 1 diabetes. The disease isn't an *auto-immune* condition, but an *altered-immune* one. And, there are built-in mechanisms that can automatically grow new islet cells for you.

So why is diabetes at epidemic levels? What's interfering with that beautiful, fully self-contained security system we have, that's supposed to protect us from diabetes? The answer is straightforward: *inflammation*. Here's some of the evidence.

- Inflammation in the islet cells is well-recognized in diabetes. That's how mainstream medicine got the (erroneous) idea that type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease.

- In one study, a major diet overhaul with Pritikin-like guidelines cured type 2 diabetes in a matter of weeks in 22 obese diabetic men. Critics say a diet like that isn't a cure; it only reduces diabetic symptoms. But the diet completely resolved the health conditions that are at the root of diabetes: obesity, high blood sugar, and inflammation—as shown when high levels of inflammatory markers in the blood dropped into a normal range.
- The substance P injections in the Canadian research were powerfully anti-inflammatory and coincided with the spectacular reversal of diabetes in both type 1 and type 2 diabetic mice.
- Normally, inflammation flares up long enough to facilitate healing (that's its job), then the body snuffs it out. While it's burning, it naturally causes insulin resistance, which causes your blood sugar to rise, which increases the delivery of nutrients to wherever the problem is—all to fuel your healing. But when inflammation smolders chronically due to stress, disease, ingestion of pro-inflammatory foods, or being overweight, pro-inflammatory chemicals called *cytokines* become mainstays in your bloodstream. And their very presence blocks the normal action of protective compounds like *GLP-1* and *IRS2*.

The breakthroughs in these studies give us some great new insights, but we still don't have all the answers. Until the mouse studies are adapted to humans, for example, we can't say whether the results will cross over. But, as usual, mainstream medicine is scrambling to put out new drug\$, even though there hasn't been nearly enough time for long-term safety studies. In the short run, significant side effects of these new therapies have already appeared, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, hypoglycemia, and drug interactions.

My Recommendations

I certainly don't expect you to go for shots into your pancreas. But there are other ways to achieve the same goal of reviving those cells and restoring full function. So here's the plan. To be blunt, wake up and recognize your body's amazing capacity to heal itself. Recognize conventional medicine's shortcomings and go natural. That means dump the junk, work for balance, and let life work for you.

Take the following steps. If you already have diabetes, have a conversation with your physician so he or she can monitor your progress and reduce your drug dependence appropriately as these changes steer you onto that path to being fully alive again.

Natural News Today

Medicine Based on Fact, Not Fear

Too often modern medicine uses fear as a motivator. "Have this surgery," or you'll drop dead in the parking lot. "Take your medicine," or you'll blow up like a balloon. And, lately, "Don't take any supplements," because "we don't know" how they'll interfere with those drugs you supposedly need.

Well, finally we have a perspective rooted in reality, from results revealed at the recent Experimental Biology 2007 meeting. Researchers at the University of Kansas headed by Dr. Gregory Reed put healthy men and women ages 20–59 on a cocktail of five different drugs. This was done to get baseline readings that represent the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination of over 90 percent of prescription drugs.

Then they had the folks take ginseng and placebo; ginkgo with a placebo; ginseng and ginkgo together; or two placebos only. After taking the doses for 4 weeks, the drug cocktail was given again. Blood and urine samples were collected to see if there was any alteration in the way the different drugs were used by the body. There was no significant change in how the body handled any of the five drugs, regardless of whether ginseng or ginkgo was taken alone or in combination.

Dr. Reed said this indicates that taking these supplements alone or together as commonly recommended is likely to have no effect on the pharmacokinetics of most common prescription and OTC drugs. I think it's safe to extend these results to other herbs and supplements. This is a terrific piece of the puzzle put in place, and should provide peace of mind to all of you who are doing everything you can to stave off the modern medical monster.

Presented at Experimental Biology 2007, Washington DC, May 1, 2007.

Cooking Methods Cut Cancer

Lots of research done over many years supports the use of Brassica vegetables—cabbage, cauliflower, collards, broccoli, turnips, watercress, radishes, kale, and the like—to decrease your risk of cancer. The cancer-fighting teeth in these foods come primarily from your body's conversion of compounds called glucosinolates into isothiocyanates like DIM and I3C.

Now, a novel study has examined the effect that cooking and storage have on the glucosinolate content of various vegetables. Researchers from the University of Warwick bought fresh broccoli, cauliflower, green cabbage, and Brussels sprouts, then began boiling the vegetables soon after purchasing them. Boiling for 30 minutes caused severe glucosinolate loss—by 77 percent in broccoli, 75 percent in cauliflower, 65 percent in green cabbage, and 58 percent in Brussels sprouts. They found that boiling these vegetables even for 5 minutes led to losses of 20–30 percent.

Other cooking methods were less damaging. Steaming for up to 20 minutes, stir-frying for 5 minutes, and microwaving for 3 minutes created no significant loss of the anti-cancer punch. Another pleasing result of this study was that normal refrigerator storage for up to 7 days led to only minor losses of glucosinolate.

Previous studies have shown the effect of various cooking methods on vitamins and minerals, glycation, and the production of toxins, but when it comes to the increasingly important phytochemical, well, there had been no information at all.

So, stir-fry some fresh broccoli tonight for best results. No boiling, please.

References: *Int J Cancer*. 2007;120:2208–2213.

www2.warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/research_says_boiling/

1. Eat a whole-foods diet that's unprocessed, free of chemicals, and largely plant-based. This not only provides you with top-notch nutrition, it's also powerfully anti-inflammatory. By avoiding the trans fats, additives, and refined carbs that set your body up for every kind of disease, including diabetes, you will also see excess pounds melting off—which is also anti-inflammatory. I recommend using the Pritikin Diet as a guideline. For more information, visit www.pritikin.com.
2. Exercise at least 5 days per week. Work up to an hour a day of mild to moderate intensity exercise, which improves your insulin sensitivity and reduces your insulin demand.
3. Replace lost nutrients. I recommend a top-quality multinutrient such as Super Vita Boost by Naturally Vitamins. Get at least 200 IU vitamin E, 250 mg vitamin C, and 90 mg alpha lipoic acid daily. These nutrients in particular, even in modest doses, can help restore blood sugar balance.

I'm very excited by this new research, and continue to be humbled by the body's innate ability to heal itself. I've seen many "incurable" diseases do a 180 under my watch. The healing comes from Nature, though. All I do is help patients create balance and inner strength through natural practices that give their bodies what they need; I help them stop interfering with their built-in defenses. It takes commitment, but I've seen it work many times. A cure is simply a matter of *restoring balance* so your body can heal and maintain itself. What happens in my patients has become familiar: First, they feel better. Then, gradually, as they remake themselves, they grow out of their illness. It's why I still do what I do.

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Eating Well

Fiber: Beyond the Bathroom

If you believe that you need to think about fiber only when you're plugged up, think again. Fiber will definitely help you if you're constipated, but relieving constipation is the least of its jobs. In fact, many folks who have too little fiber in their diet aren't constipated (yet). Those who are, are *lucky*, because constipation motivates them to improve their fiber intake. And what's great about that is that fiber enhances your health in very unexpected ways, far beyond regular bowel movements. There's just one catch, though: You need the right kind of fiber.

Most medical associations say that the minimum daily fiber requirement is anywhere from 20 to 35 grams per day. But get a load of this: Our hunter-gatherer ancestors consumed 100 to 150 grams per day. It wasn't until they stopped roaming and started farming that their fiber intake started decreasing. Today, the average daily fiber intake in the US is a pitiful 14 grams—not even close to the so-called minimum daily requirement and a tiny fraction of our ancestors' intake. You might attribute that to "progress," but consider this: You have essentially the same gut your ancestors had, which needed up to ten times the amount of fiber you're getting. No wonder it's more common to be constipated than not! And, as you'll soon see, this also explains some other unhealthy developments in modern living.

What Fiber Does

"Fiber" usually brings to mind things like All-Bran cereal and whole-wheat bread. But those foods contain chiefly *insoluble* fiber—fiber that doesn't dissolve in water. It's what makes a plant's cell walls rigid so they don't collapse, and forms part of the glue that holds the plant together. It's found in whole grains, most kinds of bran, the edible skin of fruits like apples and pears, and root vegetables. Its primary benefit for you is that it's like a broom that helps sweep out your colon. An *honorable and important* service, as far as it goes.

Then there's *soluble* fiber. Plunk it in water and it quickly swells up into a gelatinous sponge. It's found in oatmeal, fruits, vegetables, barley, beans, and seeds, and it's what they call a *fermentable* complex carbohydrate—meaning that friendly bacteria living inside your colon can digest it (by fermenting it) as their primary source of food. They need it, to support their own colonies, which are a major part of your immune system. They protect you against armies of pathogens that are trying to invade your body via your gut. As those good bugs *thrive* on the soluble fiber you eat, they produce byproducts called short chain fatty acids (SCFAs), which just happen to be the favorite fuel source for the cells that make up your colon. Those cells need SCFAs to survive, stay healthy, function optimally, and heal.

Soluble fiber provides so many benefits because it isn't just one substance, the way insoluble fiber is. Instead, it's made up of a variety of substances, such as lignans (like those found in flax), glucans (from, for example, oats), and pectin (from fruits). You can see why you need to *get your fiber directly* from food, rather than relying on a couple spoonfuls out of a jar every day—those spoonfuls just won't provide all the substances your body needs.

A Lack of Fiber Robs You of Health

Many medical researchers now believe that a lack of fiber is the biggest contributing factor in the current epidemics of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and colon cancer in the US. Here's the straight poop on these and other health problems that can be caused by too little fiber, and held at bay when fiber intake is restored.

Constipation. It's not just inconvenient and uncomfortable. The longer your *stool sits* in your gut, the more it putrefies (rots) while some nasty byproducts get absorbed into your bloodstream. That's a phenomenon called *autointoxication*—

self-poisoning. It sets you up for all kinds of miserable symptoms that often get misdiagnosed and mistreated, while that putrefying stool directly damages your colon wall and makes its tissues less able to do their work. The result is a snowball effect that can take your health downhill with it. While insoluble fiber definitely bulks up your stool and may be all you need to make constipation go away, soluble fiber can do that and more.

Diverticulosis. You should get your first colonoscopy when you turn 50, to check for colon cancer. If you've already had one, there's a strong likelihood you've been told you have *diverticulosis*, which has gotten so prevalent in the over-50 crowd that it's now more common to have it than to not have it. In fact, two-thirds of all Americans are diagnosed with diverticulosis by age 85. It's basically a blowout in the colon wall's weak spots, where its outer muscles are slightly parted to make room for blood vessels. The cause of the blowout? Too much pressure inside the colon thanks to too little fiber—which makes your stool smaller and harder, which makes your colon's muscles squeeze harder to move it along. Think of pinching one end of a balloon and how that makes the other end bulge. As the muscle fibers separate with the increased pressure, the colon's inner layers pooch through, forming a little sac (diverticulum).

Most people with diverticulosis have several such blowouts and aren't even aware of it. In about 15 percent of those people, their condition advances to *diverticulitis*—when food gets trapped in one of those sacs and starts a festering “fire” in there. Diverticulitis often requires surgery, the sacs can rupture and cause life-threatening peritonitis, and the condition often comes back after it's been “fixed.” It's also a big fat risk factor for colon cancer, thanks at least in part to the massive inflammation it causes.

Boosting your insoluble fiber intake bulks up your stool so your colon muscles don't have to squeeze so hard to push it out. This decreases the pressure that otherwise would pop out another diverticulum. Boosting your soluble fiber also helps keep friendly bacteria in power, decreases the chance of infection, and helps your colon heal quicker by bathing it in its favorite nutrients.

Colon cancer. There are three SCFAs “exhaled” by friendly bacteria when they're happily fermenting the soluble fiber you eat: butyric, propionic, and acetic acids. All three of them—but butyric acid in particular—provide powerful protection against the growth of cancer cells in the colon, while encourag-

ing non-cancerous cells to proliferate and heal faster. And, as I already mentioned, by lowering your risk of diverticulosis and its complications, soluble fiber further lowers your risk of colon cancer. As another indicator of your need for soluble fiber, numerous studies have shown that it's whole grains, not just “fiber” alone (meaning insoluble fiber), that's associated with a reduced risk of colon cancer.

Inflammation. It's well documented that soluble fiber intake reduces inflammation, in both the colon and the body in general. It's also well documented that inflammation is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease and diabetes. In a recent study of 524 subjects comparing dietary fiber intake with blood levels of C-reactive protein (CRP—a marker for acute inflammation), the higher the dietary fiber intake, the lower the CRP levels.

Cardiovascular disease. There's plenty of evidence that fiber, particularly soluble fiber, is good for your heart. Through several different pathways, it lowers the amount of cholesterol you absorb from the animal-sourced foods you eat. But, contrary to popular belief, that's not soluble fiber's biggest contribution to your heart. In fact, only a fraction of your cholesterol comes from your food; most of it is manufactured, on purpose, by your liver, to try and patch over the damage done to your arteries by inflammation. Soluble fiber's ability to help counteract inflammation is what does the real work to protect your arteries and heart. When there's less inflammation, your arteries can finally heal, and there's less need for cholesterol to patch over the damage—so your cholesterol levels drop naturally. This is why a lack of soluble fiber is widely recognized as a major contributor to cardiovascular disease, and why many cereal boxes have healthy heart claims proudly printed on them.

Decreased immunity. When your soluble fiber intake is inadequate, friendly colon bacteria such as *Bifidobacteria*, which need soluble fiber to support their colonies, can't thrive. Substitute bacteria such as *Bacteroides* move in, but they're not loyal benefactors—if conditions go sour, they'll switch to the dark side and become pathogenic. The only sustainable way to increase your gut population of loyal bacteria, and thereby have a strong first-line immune system, is to increase your intake of soluble fiber.

Impaired healing. When your colon is healthy, it's constantly sorting out nutrients from things that should go to the hazmat dump. But to do this job it has to get up close and personal with your hazardous wastes, and thereby suffers a certain amount

of damage every day. Its ability to heal quickly and completely is vital to your ability to stay well, and soluble fiber is a cornerstone of that ability. In one study, researchers removed sections of colon from laboratory rats, and sewed the cut ends back together. Half the rats got a soluble fiber supplement added to their standard rat chow. And, half of each group got radiation "treatments" to the pelvic area before the surgery, which ordinarily impairs healing. Two weeks later, the degree of healing from the surgery was assessed. All the fiber-fed rats healed significantly faster and better than those that didn't get soluble fiber—even those that *didn't* get irradiated.

Diabetes. When soluble fiber arrives in the stomach, its gelatinous nature starts slowing down the rate at which your stomach empties its contents into your small intestine. This slows down the rate of glucose absorption, helps stabilize your blood glucose levels, and helps restore and protect your insulin sensitivity. The result: a much healthier metabolism. This is why lack of soluble fiber intake is widely recognized as a major cause of today's diabetes epidemic, and why boosting soluble fiber is such a godsend in preventing and treating diabetes. It's also a great way to curb an out-of-control appetite, because it helps keep you feeling fuller, longer.

The Bottom Line

The American Diabetes Association's daily fiber recommendation is 25 to 50 grams, and in several studies on cholesterol and heart effects the subjects consumed up to 100 grams per day. I know a lot of slender, vibrantly healthy, middle-aged men and women who easily get 75 grams per day—and look (and feel) half their age. (Think that's an impossible amount? Not so. I've posted menu suggestions and food fiber content for you on my Web site, www.DrMarcusLaux.com.)

Here's what I suggest for you.

1. Shoot for 50 grams, of which 25 to 60 percent is soluble fiber. Work up to this amount gradually, giving your body time to adapt.
2. Let whole foods be your mainstay. Cook from scratch if you can, and scrub fruits and vegetables rather than peeling them (much of the fiber is in those peels). Check the fiber content before you choose ingredients.
3. Let fiber supplements be supplemental, not your primary fiber source, and choose sources such as Acacia Tummy Fiber, which is pure soluble fiber, or Inuflora and Fiber Delights, which contain a blend of soluble and insoluble fiber. Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water for each serving to keep the fiber moving through.

It can be hard to believe that something as simple as fiber can have so many benefits. This is just one more example of the wisdom of nature.

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Here's to being naturally well today and every day,

Dr. Marcus Laux

Coming Up In Naturally Well Today

- Vaccines—the untold story
- Skin care—relief from psoriasis and eczema
- Macular degeneration—a new theory and solution

Resources

If no phone number is indicated, look for the item in health food or book stores, or visit the Web site to locate a store near you.

Multinutrient

Super Vita Boost from Naturally Vitamins, www.naturally.com or 888-766-4406

BioComplete from Natural Medica, 800-809-9618

Fiber

Acacia Tummy Fiber, www.helpforibs.com or 866-640-4942

Inuflora from Naturally Vitamins, www.naturally.com or 888-766-4406

I Want to Hear From You

Tell me what you thought about this month's letter. What did you find most useful?

What would you like to see me write about in future issues?

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The Hidden Cure for Heart Disease and Stroke

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Encyclopedias call Dr. Linus C. Pauling the greatest chemist of the last 100 years, and this may be an understatement. *New Scientist Magazine* dubbed him, “On par with Newton, Darwin and Einstein.” And he was the first person in history to win two unshared Nobel Prizes.

Dr. Pauling essentially founded the fields of modern chemistry and molecular biology. One of his most astounding discoveries was an effective, natural solution that pulls loose and destroys plaque—the health menace that leads to many cardiovascular problems.

In this report, I'll tell you about Dr. Pauling's discovery of a “hidden cure” for heart disease. I'll also help you understand the truth about heart disease, risk factors for it, and other natural cures to help reduce your risk.

The Pauling Therapy Is a Proven, Patented Heart Health Solution

When trying to better understand atherosclerosis or “hardening of the arteries,” Dr. Pauling

looked closely at the plaque and found that its main component was a type of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol called lipoprotein A, or Lp(a) for short. He found that if you had more than 20 mg/dL of Lp(a) in your blood, it would begin to deposit on arterial walls. This, in turn, could lead to heart disease, peripheral arterial disease, and stroke.

But Dr. Pauling didn't stop there. He dug a step deeper and considered what was *causing* the Lp(a) to stick to the arteries. It turns out that arterial walls contain lysine, an amino acid that attracts Lp(a) somewhat like metal to a magnet. So, to counter this pull, Dr. Pauling suggested putting lysine into the blood in greater amounts so that there would be a sufficient draw on Lp(a) to keep it in the bloodstream and prevent it from sticking to arterial walls. In fact, if there were enough lysine in the blood, it would not only prevent new plaque formations, but also pull out existing plaque that had already adhered to arterial walls.

In addition to his research on supplemental lysine, Dr. Pauling did extensive research on common vitamins and how much should be taken for optimal health. He was especially convinced of the value of vitamin C in doses up to 3,000 mg per day. Dr. Pauling found that, if you weren't getting enough vitamin C, the integrity of your blood vessels would be compromised and lead to cracks in the blood vessels throughout your body. These, in turn, would attract Lp(a), which acts as a scab over

the wounded blood vessels. So, by adding large doses of vitamin C to his lysine therapy, Dr. Pauling hoped to address the underlying issue of blood vessel strength and resiliency as well as prevent the excessive plaque build-up of atherosclerosis. This combination formula, which has been granted a U.S. patent, was named the “Pauling Therapy.”

Perhaps one of the most exciting things about the Pauling Therapy is that it consists of two natural elements—an amino acid and a vitamin—both of which are inexpensive, widely available, and have nearly zero toxicity.

A PERFECTED FORMULA THAT'S SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

After Dr. Pauling's death (at age 93!), his followers continued to test and perfect his formula, adding nutrients to further protect the cardiovascular system against free-radical damage and promote overall good health. *SaveYourHeart.com* is a company that sells both an “original” and “advanced” formula for heart health based on the Pauling Therapy. Heart Technology is recommended as nutritional protection for anyone concerned about developing heart disease or who has a family history of heart disease. Ascorsine-9 is an advanced formula with higher dosages of vitamins A and B6 and the amino acids L-proline and L-carnitine. It also has added vitamin K, taurine, creatine, and magnesium. This nutritional formula is recommended if you have already been diagnosed with heart disease. Contact *www.saveyourheart.com* or 800-280-5302 for more information on these Pauling Therapy formulas or to place an order.

The Uncommon Truth About Heart Disease

Now that you know the “hidden cure” for heart disease, how do you know if it will work for you? And what other natural therapies might be helpful in reducing your risk? For the remainder of this report, I'll explain some other factors that contribute to heart disease—particularly

oxidized LDL and inflammation. Then I'll tell you what you can do about them, as well as some other ways to lower Lp(a) and promote overall heart health.

What if I were to say to you that **most “heart” problems have nothing to do with the heart?** Would you put down this report right now? Don't—because what we're going to discuss could save your life. In many cases, what is being labeled as a heart problem is actually a plumbing problem—or a dysfunction within the circulatory system. The blood becomes overcrowded with excess clotting factors, proteins, fats, and other substances that create irritation, plaque buildup, and potentially clots that can starve the heart. It's essentially like your car when it's long overdue for an oil change.

Elevated cholesterol is one of the warning signs of “polluted” blood (not poor heart function)—but probably not in the way you think. While it's true that a patient with escalated LDL levels may be at a higher risk for heart disease, the mere presence of LDL is not the problem. LDL is as important to the healthy functioning of your body as the cholesterol-removing “good” HDL. It's the *oxidation* of LDL that moves you into the danger zone.

OXIDIZED LDL

LDL carries much-needed cholesterol through the body which helps digest fats, strengthen cell membranes, insulate nerves, and make hormones. LDL gets a bad rap because it is easily oxidized and derailed by free radicals, leaving its cholesterol delivery in an ominous place and forming arterial plaque build-ups that can eventually break up and leave debris in the blood. Worse, the free-radical activity that damaged the LDL also initiated an inflammatory reaction, a problem we'll discuss shortly. Basically, the more LDL you have delivering cholesterol, the more it can be crippled by free radicals. *This* is why reducing LDL is recommended.

Oxidation of LDL can be thought of as a mugging by thieving free radicals. Free radicals are

molecules with an unpaired electron looking to steal a mate from the next molecule down the line. In a healthy person, free radicals are neutralized by antioxidants before they can cause damage. If a person is deficient in antioxidant support, these nasty scavengers will eventually alter enzymes, proteins, and even DNA. **A person with exceptional levels of antioxidants—even if they have high cholesterol—is not at remotely the same heart risk as a person with poor antioxidant intake.**

When faced with elevated cholesterol levels, the best thing you can do is neutralize free radicals by immediately increasing your antioxidant support. This means:

- ▶ Get plenty of vitamin C (2–3 g), vitamin E (400–800 IU), selenium (100–200 mcg), alpha lipoic acid (100 mg), coenzyme Q10 (30–90 mg), and a high-potency B complex. If you take a high-quality multivitamin/mineral and supplement with an antioxidant formula, you should be covered. All of these antioxidants can help prevent free-radical damage, control the oxidation of LDL, and reduce the risk of inflammation. Note: CoQ10 is particularly important if you're taking statins because these drugs rapidly decrease your supply of this heart-protecting nutrient.
- ▶ Ginger, also known as Zingiber, is a tasty combination of antioxidants that has been found to be a powerful heart protector. A study reported in the *Journal of Nutrition* by a group of Israeli scientists found that ginger extract could have dramatic effects on cardiovascular health, including preventing the oxidation of LDL and atherosclerosis and lowering overall cholesterol levels. I recommend Gingerforce by New Chapter, or Gingerall by Enzymatic Therapy. Take one softgel three times a day with meals.

To maximize antioxidant support and reduce the risk of arterial buildup, give the free-radical fighters less work—take drug-free steps to lower your total cholesterol:

- ▶ Supplement with 200–300 mg of pantethine (a form of B5) three times per day. Pantethine has been used in Japan for 30 years. It significantly lowers total cholesterol and LDL, and raises HDL. Studies have shown that on average, pantethine can lower LDL cholesterol levels by 14 percent. I recommend Cholestoral by Enzymatic Therapy, or Pantethine-Time by Carlson Laboratories. Take one tablet two to three times a day with meals.
- ▶ Plant sterols are plant fats that look and act just like the body's own natural cholesterol. They fit neatly into cholesterol receivers, reducing the absorption of cholesterol without ever resorting to drugs. I recommend Cholestoral Plus by Enzymatic Therapy. Take one capsule three times a day with meals.
- ▶ Artichoke leaf extract has been studied for decades as an effective heart helper. Most recently it has come into the spotlight as a cholesterol-controlling plant extract. A 1996 double-blind study on the cholesterol-lowering effect of artichoke leaf extract on 44 healthy individuals, under strictly controlled conditions, resulted in a significant decrease in cholesterol levels in those who had the highest starting levels of cholesterol. I recommend Artichoke Extract by either Nature's Way or Enzymatic Therapy. Take 600 mg two to three times per day with meals.
- ▶ Gugulipid increases the liver's ability to break down cholesterol. Several clinical studies have shown supplemental use of gugulipid can effectively regulate total cholesterol, triglyceride, and HDL levels. I recommend Gugulmax by Nature's Herbs, or GugulPlus by Enzymatic Therapy (both are standardized to 2.5 percent guggulsterones). Take 500 mg twice daily with meals.
- ▶ Policosanol is an all-natural waxy derivative from sugar cane and other sources that acts on the liver to help maintain healthy cholesterol levels. In 13 of 14 randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind studies conducted on patients with high cholesterol

levels, policosanol consistently lowered LDL levels while boosting HDL levels. The fourteenth trial did not measure the HDL factor.

A study published in the *American Heart Journal* concluded, “policosanol seems to be a very promising phytochemical alternative to classic lipid-lowering agents such as the statins.” Five different clinical trials have shown policosanol’s effectiveness compared to simvastatin, lovastatin, and pravastatin.

For cholesterol control, I recommend 10–15 mg of policosanol with a meal, preferably in the evening. Adjust your dosage as your cholesterol begins to stabilize. I recommend Policosanol or Policosanol Cholesterol Complex by Source Naturals. Policosanol Cholesterol Complex also contains most of the high-quality, high-potency heart protectors discussed in this section. Another good brand is PoliChol by Life Enhancement.

Reducing Lipoprotein A

Since Dr. Pauling made his discovery, Lp(a) has come to the forefront as a substantial marker for potential heart problems. The *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* reported a study involving 2,191 men, ages 20 to 54, in which elevated levels of Lp(a) appear to be a strong predictor for the development of heart disease. Other studies have indicated that people with high Lp(a) levels have a 70-percent greater risk of developing heart disease over a ten-year period. *JAMA* states that Lp(a) appears to regulate clot formation and inhibit blood thinning. While Lp(a) also repairs damaged or leaky blood vessels, it can also build up as deposits on arterial walls.

Unfortunately, Lp(a) isn’t as easy to control as other cholesterol factors and is not responsive to traditional cholesterol-lowering drugs. Heredity may play a substantial role. If there is a history of heart disease in your family, you are diabetic, or if you are experiencing menopausal changes, ask your doctor about having your Lp(a) levels

Elevated Risk: Low Antioxidant Intake

Is your body warning you that your antioxidant levels are low? Here are a few silent signals of trouble:

- Poor skin quality, particularly easy bruising and premature aging
- Adult acne or brown spots on the skin
- Vision problems
- Dry, brittle hair or thin nails, or inflammatory bowel disease or ulcers.

checked. If they’re found to be higher than 10 mg/dL, in addition to the Pauling Therapy the following natural therapies for lowering Lp(a) and for overall heart health could prove helpful:

- Increase your intake of essential fatty acids (EFAs). EFAs help block the inflammatory and blood clotting capabilities of Lp(a). Excellent sources of EFAs include fresh, wild fish; dark, leafy green vegetables; and nuts. Make coldwater fish such as salmon, halibut, Chilean sea bass, sardines, or mackerel part of your weekly diet. You can also supplement with 2–3 g of high-quality fish oil. I recommend Eskimo-3 by Enzymatic Therapy or Arctic Pure by Source Naturals. Take 1–2 capsules two to three times per day with meals.

Nuts are also high in EFAs, and they make a great snack. A study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* noted the heart-healthy benefits of nuts. Participants in the study who consumed nuts regularly had a significantly lower risk of dying from heart disease, compared with those who did not eat nuts. Nuts are a rich source of magnesium, potassium, vitamin E, and the amino acid arginine, all of which help protect the heart and blood vessels.

- Take 100–200 mg of inositol hexaniacinate (a close cousin of niacin without the uncomfortable side effects), four times a day with food. A study from the University of Arkansas

for Medical Sciences reported a 35-percent decrease in Lp(a) after 26 weeks of using inositol hexaniacinate. It proved even more effective when combined with vitamin C.

- Avoid soy products. Although these foods have been found to be beneficial in preventing heart disease, the opposite is true when it comes to elevated Lp(a). A study published in July 2001 showed that soy protein raised Lp(a) levels by 15 percent.

Inflammation—the Silent Signal

Believe it or not, arterial buildups (and other blood debris) are just the beginning of the heart mystery. Medical doctors and cardiologists have started to focus on what may be the underlying factor in most heart-related incidents—chronic inflammation.

Inflammation is caused by injury, infection, exposure to toxins, viruses or bacteria, free-radical activity, excessive sugar intake, or an unbalanced ratio of “bad” fats to “good” fats. Needless to say, after a few decades on this planet, our bodies have been exposed to the effects of inflammation.

Inflammatory response is a natural healing mechanism that is beneficial, necessary, and usually short-lived. Your body reacts to a wound or infection as a protective measure—as you heal, the inflammation subsides and resolves with a fully healed, benign scar. Healthy, “unpolluted” blood flows easily past this small repair. But as we age or as a result of poor lifestyle choices, our bodies can become chronically inflamed—losing the ability to regulate the inflammatory process.

The Inflammation Assault

In this constant state of “burning,” what is normally a coordinated “attack-heal-retreat” process becomes a continuous cascade of inflammatory reactions. Small blood vessels constantly dilate to allow for white blood cell activity. This has the potential to cause fluid

High Risk: Hypertension

Hypertension triples your risk of dying from a heart attack, quadruples your risk of heart failure, and puts you at seven times greater risk for stroke. Forty million Americans are estimated to battle with this heart-endangering factor. Here’s what happens. When blood pressure is too high, it pounds through the circulatory system, weakening blood vessels and making them vulnerable to toxins and oxidized LDL. It’s often referred to as the silent killer—the symptoms can be subtle or non-existent. Having a routine blood pressure check is the best way to monitor this body signal, but in some cases, there will be silent alerts:

- Headaches, chest pain or tightness, nosebleeds, numbness, and tingling
- Excessive perspiration, muscle cramps, weakness, palpitations, frequent urination
- Ringing or hearing your heart beat in your ears
- Loss of peripheral vision or certain types of glaucoma. Your doctor should be able to see damage to the optic nerve caused by an increase in blood pressure.

to leak into surrounding tissue that can lead to swelling—congesting, constraining, and decreasing nutrients.

The immune cells rush to the wounded area and drop powerful bacteria-fighting bombs, releasing free radicals in the process. Antioxidants try to respond but are inhibited by the inflammation. It’s like a four-alarm fire with everyone thrown in the mix! The body then releases loads of fibrin and other blood-clotting agents to try to mend the problem.

But the war isn’t over yet. In a chronically inflamed individual, clotting factors tend just to cover up the wound rather than healing it. So there’s an abscess of inflammatory products trapped under the “band-aid.” With each new inflammation flare-up, these cells can become activated and burst the “band-aid,” sending more

debris into the blood and initiating yet another inflammatory onslaught.

One could argue that factors such as high cholesterol and hypertension do not *cause* heart trouble but rather aggravate the underlying dangers of inflammation. In fact, a 1997 study carried out at Harvard and other leading medical schools found that chronic inflammation increased the risk of heart attack threefold and doubled the risk of stroke.

Aspirin has been shown to be effective in reducing inflammation and thinning the blood. But the long-term use of this conventional treatment is dangerous, and the side effects heavily outweigh the benefits. **Aspirin and the family of NSAIDs are estimated to be responsible for 20,000 deaths each year and 125,000 hospitalizations, largely as a result of gastrointestinal ulceration and bleeding.**

Fortunately, there are safer ways to address internal inflammation—and we'll talk about them in a moment. But first, let's go over some simple, yet effective ways to determine if chronic inflammation is a problem for you.

Getting Inside Your Heart

An inflammatory reaction involves dozens of healers, fighters, and menders that are released to protect the body and alleviate the fires inside. Some of these substances can be used as inflammation markers, and their presence is easily measured by a blood test. These markers are not your enemy—they are natural necessities that serve a function. It's their *chronic* or *elevated* presence that can send out a danger alert.

You'll need to enlist the help of your doctor in gathering these messages, but remember whatever you find out, don't panic. By listening to these signals and addressing the problem, you are taking a huge step toward prevention. If you get a clear message that something's amiss, be grateful that you were smart enough to listen.

I strongly recommend talking to your doctor about CRP testing—it's a relatively inexpensive, life-saving bargain at around \$20 per test. Be sure to ask for the high-sensitivity CRP test, which can more accurately measure inflammation in the blood vessels. Make your doctor aware of any recent medical events that may have temporarily elevated your CRP results such as tissue injury, surgery, or infection. It's usually a good idea to have the test done twice, about two weeks apart, to establish a baseline.

FIBRINOGEN

I mentioned earlier that fibrin (a blood protein) is one mender in the inflammation process. Fibrin is created by activating fibrinogen; if your body is producing a lot of fibrinogen, it's also likely to be making a lot of fibrin, which can cause abnormal blood clotting. Fibrinogen tends to rise with age, and high levels are often found among smokers and menopausal women. If you're female or a smoker, have your doctor run a fibrinogen test. An acceptable range is 300 mg/dL. If your levels are 360 mg/dL or higher and you smoke, stop smoking. If your levels are elevated, you're not a smoker, and you're experiencing menopause, I recommend having your estrogen levels checked. Excess fibrinogen also can be a result of estrogen imbalance.

SERUM FERRITIN

Ferritin, an iron-carrying protein, is an inflammatory reactant inside blood cells. Elevated ferritin levels can indicate iron overload. While iron is a necessary nutrient used primarily for oxygenating our bodies, too much iron can directly harm the heart and encourage the growth of infectious organisms that contribute to inflammation. A 1992 Finnish study involving 1,900 men, ages 45 to 60, found that excess levels of ferritin were more than twice as likely to cause heart attacks, and that every one-percent increase in ferritin translated into a four-percent increase in heart attack risk.

Iron overload is a more prevalent problem than many people realize. Millions of people take

Elevated Risk: Excess Sugar

It's been all over the medical news: Reduce your sugar intake. This can be tricky with so many sources popping up in the typical American diet. But don't give up—excess sugar depletes B vitamins (leading to inflammation and increased levels of homocysteine), causes insulin resistance (leading to diabetes), elevates triglyceride levels (leading to atherosclerosis), and causes obesity. Your body will tell you when it's getting too much sugar. Don't misinterpret these common signs of sugar overload:

- Panic attacks and anxiety
- Adult acne
- Fatigue
- Morning headaches
- Insomnia
- Forgetfulness

iron-fortified supplements and drink well water containing iron—both of which can lead to iron overload. This is especially true in people with hemochromatosis, a hereditary disorder that causes excessive iron absorption. Postmenopausal women are also at risk for iron overload since they no longer lose iron through menstruation. Women also begin to exceed men in the occurrence of heart attacks post-menopausally. Symptoms of iron overload include:

- ▶ Joint pain is the most common symptom—excess iron accumulates at the joints
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Abdominal pain
- ▶ Irritable bowel syndrome
- ▶ Hair loss
- ▶ Explosive diarrhea

Ask your doctor to run a simple, inexpensive blood serum ferritin test. If your ferritin levels are high, lower your iron exposure by reducing red meat and saturated fat consumption, changing

our daily multivitamin, using steel-clad or glass cookware instead of iron, and having your water tested. If ferritin levels exceed 200, consider donating blood two to three times per year.

Note: When there is damage to organs that contain the greatest amount of ferritin (especially the liver, spleen, and bone marrow), levels can become elevated even though the total amount of iron in the body is normal. Ferritin levels may not be particularly helpful in persons with liver disease, chronic infections, cancers, or autoimmune diseases (which are all associated with organ damage).

HOMOCYSTEINE

Homocysteine is a normal byproduct of protein metabolism, specifically of methionine, an amino acid found in red meat and milk products. In a healthy person, the normal conversion of homocysteine follows this pattern: methionine is converted to homocysteine that is then converted to the necessary but harmless amino acid cysteine. The danger develops when homocysteine becomes elevated—oxidized LDL increases, free-radical activity increases, blood vessels are irritated, and blood clots occur more easily.

High homocysteine can also be an indication of inflammation. Nitric oxide, a substance produced by inflammatory reactions to infection or bacteria, is an inhibitor of the enzyme that converts homocysteine. Therefore, when inflammation increases nitric oxide levels, it inadvertently increases homocysteine levels.

Elevated homocysteine levels have been implicated in 42 percent of strokes, 28 percent of peripheral vascular disease, and 30 percent of premature cardiovascular disease. *JAMA* reported a study showing that men with the highest five percent of serum homocysteine levels were 3.1 times more likely to have had a myocardial infarction than those in the bottom 90 percent. Researchers concluded that homocysteine may be a modifiable and independent risk factor for heart disease. **This evidence suggests that measurement of homocysteine may be an**

even better indicator of who is at risk of having a heart attack or stroke than other tests, such as cholesterol and the lipid profile.

High homocysteine levels can be caused by many factors:

- ▶ Low levels of B vitamins increase homocysteine levels. Without B vitamins, your body's enzymes are crippled and can't convert homocysteine to cysteine. The effect can be worsened by high consumption of caffeine and alcohol, which produces excess urination and washes out water-soluble B vitamins.
- ▶ Excessively high protein intake from meat and dairy sources and low intake of fruits and vegetables.
- ▶ Low levels of thyroid hormone, kidney disease, psoriasis, some medicines, or inherited deficiencies in enzymes used to process homocysteine in the body.

Ask your doctor to check your homocysteine levels, especially if you have a family history of heart disease or suspect a B-vitamin deficiency. Always keep your doctor and pharmacist aware of any medications or herbs you are taking, since they may interfere with test results. Homocysteine testing for cardiac risk is fairly new, so the "normal" range is still being established. However, most medical experts agree that homocysteine should not exceed 10 umol/L.

If you do test high for homocysteine, the good news is that homocysteine can be balanced naturally in a matter of months using three B vitamins. An 11-month study involving 553 individuals reported in *JAMA* showed that homocysteine-lowering therapy using **folic acid, vitamin B12, and vitamin B6** significantly decreased the incidence of heart events.

My recommendations for homocysteine-lowering are:

- ▶ 800 mcg folic acid. Recent randomized clinical trials have shown that folic acid supplementation can lower homocysteine levels by as much as 25 percent.

- ▶ 400 mcg B12. The addition of B12 to folic acid supplementation has been shown to reduce homocysteine by an additional 7 percent.
- ▶ A high-quality B complex plus 25–50 mg of B6 daily. In addition, add dark leafy green vegetables, legumes, oranges, orange juice, and fortified cereals to your daily diet.

After 8 to 12 weeks, ask your doctor to retest your levels. If they're still high, you may need to increase your supplement intake or investigate other possible health concerns.

Knowing your levels of each of these four inflammation markers—CRP, fibrinogen, serum ferritin, and homocysteine—can get you inside your own skin and allow you to listen more intently to the clues your body is sending. Some of them are more appropriate for certain groups than others—you and your doctor can discuss which ones are right for you.

But now that you have the information, what should you do? Let's talk about some therapies that can place you in the low-risk group.

Enter the Enzyme

Enzymes are specialized proteins found in all living matter—there are over 3,000 in the human body. They perform virtually all of the metabolic functions of life and are essential for the immune, digestive, blood, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems and for elimination.

The enzymes that can help reduce inflammation are enteric-coated digestive enzymes, specifically proteolytic enzymes. When taken on an empty stomach, they enter into the lymph and bloodstream, circulating through the entire body and breaking down the proteins (mentioned earlier) that pollute and overcrowd the blood. This decreases inflammation and lowers C-reactive protein, helps reduce inflammation, improves overall blood flow, reduces chronic pain, and speeds up healing. Proteolytic enzymes also help break down clotting factors in the blood, make red blood cells more flexible,

and remove excess fibrin. Each of these actions contributes to a reduction in inflammation and thus reduces many risk factors for heart disease.

The best proteolytic enzyme product available is Wobenzym-N. Wobenzym-N contains several digestive enzymes including bromelain from pineapple stem, papain from papaya, and trypsin, chymotrypsin, and pancreatin from animal sources. Wobenzym-N is “true enteric coated,” which ensures that the enzymes survive and are delivered to the small intestine for assimilation into the blood and lymph.

It's important to take this supplement on an empty stomach—30 to 45 minutes before or two hours after a meal. Otherwise the enzymes could digest the proteins from your meal, causing excess gas, bloating, and cramping, rather than getting into the bloodstream and digesting the gunk you want to get rid of. Although Wobenzym-N can be expensive, it works better than anything else out there. For reducing inflammation, I recommend five tablets, two or three times per day.

Live Well, Live Longer: Reduce Your Risk Today

Enzymes aren't the only way to combat inflammation. Here's a quick checklist of inflammation-fighting weapons.

- ▶ Balance your ratio of good fats to bad fats. In the last few decades, the average American has increased his or her consumption of omega-6 fats, the building blocks of the body's pro-inflammatory compounds, 20- to 30-fold. This isn't surprising since corn, safflower, soybean, sunflower, cottonseed, and peanut oils are among the most popular fats found in convenience, microwavable, and fast foods. And while omega-6 fats are needed to fight infection and maintain a healthy inflammatory response, excess levels of these fats can cause the body to make abnormally large amounts of inflammation-causing compounds.

Anti-inflammatory fats are the omega-3s found in dark, leafy green vegetables; flaxseed; walnuts; and cold-water fish, and the omega-9 fats found in olive oil, macadamia nuts, and avocados. Wild game and free range, grass-fed meat also are good sources of omega-3s. Gamma-linolenic acid is an exception. This omega-6 actually has anti-inflammatory properties. It is found in leafy green vegetables. These good fats are appearing less often on the American dinner plate.

The icing on the cake, so to speak, is the heavy consumption of hydrogenated vegetable oils and trans fats like those found in fried foods and margarine. These “fake fats” compound the essential fat imbalance by crippling the action of the anti-inflammatory fats. In fact, a new report issued by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences states that there is no known safe intake of trans fatty acids in the diet.

To reduce inflammation, a person needs to restore a more naturally balanced intake of all the fatty acids, and if at all possible, avoid trans fatty acids. Historically, the body functions best at a 1:1 ratio of pro-inflammatory to anti-inflammatory fats.

- Reduce acidic foods. If you consume more acids than your body can excrete, it will simply store the extra acid in surrounding tissues, agitating the area and triggering an inflammatory response. Acidic foods include most stimulants and processed snacks as well as sugar, alcohol, vinegar, coffee, meat, and dairy products. Extreme stress, pollutants, and strenuous physical activity can also produce acids that the body must deal with.

As a general rule of thumb, the greener the vegetable, the more it will help increase alkalinity in the body. You can also take one-quarter to one-half teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate three to four times per day to help bring your acid levels under control.

- Eat one to two cloves of garlic a day, or supplement the equivalent. Studies have shown an

inverse relationship between high garlic consumption and low rates of heart disease. Garlic is indeed a powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant that can reduce blood pressure and decrease cholesterol and the likelihood of internal blood clots.

- Keep *Aloe vera* in the house. This time-tested wound healer is an excellent anti-inflammatory—both internally and externally. In addition to speeding up healing, *Aloe vera* fights virus and infection by boosting the immune system, thereby reducing the need for your inflammatory system’s emergency reactions. When choosing an aloe product, look for one with Active Aloe. Lily of the Desert is a good brand. Their products are available from the Vitamin Shoppe (www.vitaminshoppe.com; 800-223-1216).
- Supplement 100–120 mg of Pycnogenol. Pycnogenol is a natural antioxidant made from pine trees that has been found to be as effective as aspirin in reducing dangerous blood clotting. Due to its free-radical fighting properties, it also helps reduce inflammation and the oxidation of LDL, and helps the body resist infections.
- Stop smoking. Smoking is a leading, controllable risk factor for heart disease. The toxic effect agitates tissues and is a given for chronic inflammation. All the supplements out there can’t protect you from its harmful effects. Whatever it takes, break this habit!
- Maintain a healthy weight. Carrying excess weight, especially around the stomach, has been connected to inflammation in the body. Maintaining a healthy weight will not only help control inflammation, but will also reduce your risk for many other degenerative diseases.

The blood that courses through your arteries is absolutely critical to your life—transporting nutrients, carrying immune cells, oxygenating your organs, and removing wastes—its duties are endless. Keeping that blood flowing and free of debris will help protect you from the diseases

of age and degeneration. Reducing inflammation and dangerous clot-causing factors are major steps in cleaning your blood and improving the health of your circulatory system, thus reducing your risk factors for heart disease and other conditions. In essence, your blood becomes truly life-giving, not life-taking.

At this point, you may feel like you've gotten more information than you can begin to process. Perhaps you feel that your entire understanding of heart protection has been rattled. That's okay—that's why I've provided this report and why I'm pleased we'll be talking on a monthly basis. You can read and reread these recommendations as many times as you need to—add a new change to your life every week, or every month if that's what works for you. The most important thing is that you are moving toward change—and a healthier, more vital you.

Yours in good health,



Dr. Marcus Laux

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IN THIS SPECIAL REPORT

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Over the last year or so, an obscure bird virus—one that has infected fewer than 250 people worldwide—has taken center stage as a potentially mammoth

biological scare. The actors know their lines well; a BBC headline in September 2005 said that the bird flu “could kill 150 million people.” Even the United Nations’ co-coordinator for avian and human influenza said at the time, “It’s like a combination of global warming and HIV/AIDS ten times faster than it’s running at the moment.”

Based on what we know now, though, the so-called “bird flu” will end up being more of a featherweight than a heavyweight. The dire scenarios that get the media play are all “what if” guesses rather than scientifically based predictions. However, even if the “bird flu” never becomes the full-out pandemic that some officials predicted, there are plenty of other types of flu and sickness that can take a toll on your body.

In this report, I will share some simple remedies you can use to naturally keep your immune system strong. I will also outline recommendations for protecting and healing your body if a flu outbreak—whether bird or human—should occur.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Whether or not you're a fan of conspiracy theories, I have to tell you that this avian flu story smells. Too many people have too much to gain by scaring the public. First, people don't get their

names in the paper by saying, “Move along, folks, there's nothing to see here.” It's the sensational statements that get the headlines and that get people quoted in the nightly news.

Second, there's a lot of money to be made here. Pharmaceutical manufacturers in the US are protected against claims of vaccine-induced harm. So, if a pharmaceutical company can convince the government to make vaccination mandatory, 280 million doses translates into a pile of essentially risk-free money now. What's more, there's a precedent for mandatory vaccination; remember the National Influenza Immunization Program for the “swine flu” in 1976?

THE REAL STORY

The notorious Type A H5N1 strain is particularly contagious in birds—especially ducks and other migratory birds. The true danger from this virus is the contamination of flocks of domestic birds that are kept under conditions that weaken their immune systems—leaving them more susceptible to infection. The supposed danger with bird flu is that the virus could make the jump from birds to humans.

Viruses are normally confined to a single type of host—birds or hoofed animals, for example. One scenario is that a person who works closely with birds might have a human flu already, and then come in contact with infected birds. The two viruses would meet and combine into a bird-type pathogen that's transmissible among humans. Another scenario involves an intermediate host such as pigs (as was the case with the “swine flu”).

The few human cases of bird flu (currently, there are none in the US) have apparently involved people who worked directly with live, infected birds—specifically by breathing in particles of dried droppings. There seems to be no danger from the meat, even of infected birds. Common-sense precautions, then, are: Eat meat from birds only if it's well-cooked, don't handle dead or sick birds, and wear a filter mask when working with bird droppings.

Building Immunity Is Your First Line of Defense

I don't want to leave you with the wrong impression; if avian flu ever did make the jump to a human-transmissible form, it could be truly dangerous. The United Nations has recommended that countries stock up on two medications, oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza) to deal with an outbreak of avian flu. I see two things wrong with that approach. First, there simply isn't enough of either drug to go around; and second, research from Hong Kong shows that avian flu has developed resistance to oseltamivir.

Rather than rely on a pharmaceutical solution that may not be available (due to hoarding, depleted supplies, et cetera) and may not work even if you could get it, you should begin by continuing to practice good hygiene. I know it sounds simple, but wash with soap and hot water after you come in from the outside world and before eating, and carry alcohol- or bleach-based antiseptic wipes to use as needed. You should also take steps to naturally build your immunity. You have two types of immunity: your innate and your acquired. Let's take a closer look at each one.

MAINTAIN YOUR INNATE IMMUNITY...

Your body's innate ability to deal with infections is based on such components as your skin (which blocks the entry of germs and parasites), your mucous membranes (which trap and expel them), and your digestive secretions—from stomach acid to digestive enzymes to friendly intestinal flora (which make the body inhospitable to them). Even coughing, sneezing, and vomiting are parts

of a mostly autonomous action for ridding the body of either infective agents or toxic waste.

Innate immunity has no memory, which means that it is non-specific to any intruder and just does the best job it can. With repeated infecting offenses, there are no changes in our innate defenses. Our innate immunity just holds the line as long as it can.

To keep your innate immunity working efficiently, you need to keep your skin healthy and pores clear by scrubbing and using natural personal care products. You also need to stay well hydrated to keep wastes moving through the body and to keep tissues suffused so they don't dry out and lose their ability to function—which includes keeping the mucous membranes saturated with their protective slick barrier. Finally, maintaining your innate immunity requires eating adequate fiber and sustaining the beneficial bacteria that are meant to thrive in your gut—perhaps by taking a quality probiotic product that will deliver vital flora directly to the intestines where they'll do the most good. These natural antimicrobial substances do an amazing job in keeping you free from diseases and toxins.

Most of the bugs that cause us to get sick are opportunistic. They don't cause problems until we provide them with a lowered immune status, nutritional deficiency, dehydration, or toxic build-up. Overall, if your digestion is strong, your body can kill any pathogen that enters your digestive tract. If it's weakened, pathogens can infect your body and cause trouble.

...AND NURTURE YOUR ACQUIRED IMMUNITY

Our acquired immunity must also be carefully nurtured. Another appropriate term for acquired immunity is adaptive immunity—an ability that allows your body to survive by adapting to each infection's unique circumstances. This type of immunity is connected to nurturing—either the nurturing of an infant whose innate immunity is not yet fully functional or by nurturing the specific adaptive mode that allows for sustained health. You can nurture your entire immune system by eating right, living a proper lifestyle, and managing your stress level.

You can also acquire immunity by being exposed to a microbe. Your body then stores information in your lymph tissues and blood about how it reacted to rid itself of the infection. Acquired immunity of this sort is what prevents people from getting such diseases as mumps, measles, or any particular strain of flu more than once. On another level, being exposed to virile and vital environments in nature presents you with a wider array of potential antigens that your immunity memory can save and use for a later date.

Infants acquire antibodies from the placenta of their mothers, but this transferred immunity doesn't last. It does, however, buy babies some time to build their own immune defenses. Breast-fed babies also acquire this type of immunity from their mothers' milk—particularly in the colostrum which is present during the initial stages of nursing.

The active participants in this part of our immune matrix are the T and B lymphocytes. Once they're assigned, they become devoted to that assignment and don't react to a new and different invader—only new T and B lymphocytes can take up the task of protecting against new pathogens. Antibodies are also made to specifically recognize a particular pathogen. An antibody's job is to bind to its designated pathogen, render it harmless, and help get it removed. Once the particular pathogen problem is under control, the lymphocytes suspend their activity and wait with long memories.

DON'T FALL PREY TO PREDATORY VIRUSES

In Nature, predators always inflict the most damage on the weak, but they do so through different methods. For instance, muggers will lie in wait until they see a seemingly vulnerable person—either due to size, body posture, gender, inebriation, or what have you. Similarly, insects examine a crop field with infrared vision to search for susceptible plants. But a pride of lions takes a different approach. They creep as close to a herd as they can until they are finally detected. Then they give chase to the entire herd, but only catch the slowest—either the youngest, the oldest, or the sickest.

Virus and Vaccine Primer

Flu viruses are classified in two ways. The first category is determined by the core proteins inside the virus—either type A, B, or C. Within each of these three basic types is a second classification based on the antigens on the surface of the virus: H for hemagglutinin and N for neuraminidase. There are 15 known H antigens, and nine known N antigens, which means a given virus could be classified from H1N1 to H15N9 within any of the three basic types. The avian flu virus that's getting so much attention is Type A H5N1.

The typical annual flu vaccine is designed to deal with two different type A viruses, and one type B. The particular strains used in the US vaccine are based on what showed up in Asia the year before, so they may or may not have any effect on the strains actually in circulation.

There is no vaccine against the H5N1 strain known as avian flu, though trials began in April 2005. Even if a vaccine were developed, I have my doubts about whether it would be effective. Viruses mutate, and anything developed against a specific strain could be useless against an evolved version. Not to mention that flu vaccines aren't very effective to begin with.

The myth is that flu vaccines are 70 to 90 percent effective, but a recent Cochrane review shows that's just not so. An analysis of 64 studies showed that for people over age 65, the vaccine was only about 28 percent effective. And in this case, "effective" doesn't mean you won't get the flu, it means reduced symptoms. These Cochrane results echo an NIH study showing that flu vaccination does not reduce deaths among the elderly.

Viruses are egalitarian predators that attack everyone indiscriminately—meaning that anyone coming in contact with them will be infected. Still, as with Nature's other predators, viruses inflict the most damage on the weakest—which is why fall and winter mark the cold and flu season (people are weakest during the season's transitions and tend

to have lowered immunity during the months spent indoors with sealed windows).

As we become more of a society that spends all of its time indoors, the cold and flu “season” will likely become a more year-long problem. In other words, when we shut ourselves off from nature we become weaker and more vulnerable to viral (and other microbial) infections. Proper lifestyle choices along with natural supplements and medicines can help you either prevent infection or treat your symptoms and help speed your recovery.

PREVENTION IS STILL THE BEST MEDICINE

As Benjamin Franklin wrote in his *Poor Richard's Almanack*, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. However, “prevention” tends to go against the way most Americans have been conditioned to think of their health.

Still, living right and eating properly is actually the best way to address most illnesses. Eating organic vegetables, fruit, and meat while avoiding processed carbohydrates and refined sugar is the first step toward a healthy diet that not only provides you with what you need, but also won't rob you of what you already have.

As for supplements, adaptogens can support the immune system—both the innate and the acquired. One particular adaptogen I like is astragalus. In Chinese medicine, astragalus is considered a true tonic in that it can increase overall resistance to disease by building Qi (or chi), the body's vital energy. Astragalus is a primary immune tonifier.

Astragalus contains polysaccharides, triterpene glycosides, flavonoids, trace minerals, and amino acids. Its polysaccharides stimulate pituitary-adrenal cortical activity and restore depleted red blood cell formation in bone marrow. Additionally, human and in vitro research confirms that astragalus enhances immune function by increasing the activity of white blood cells. It also increases immune cell development and deployment while boosting production of antibodies and interferon—a natural substance that the body uses to combat

viral intruders. The immune-enhancing effect has been noted in both sick and healthy people.

It's one of the few herbs that can be taken daily. However, I recommend using it only as a preventive measure to build immunity. Some believe its energy can help keep invaders out, but if you are already sick it may keep invaders in, too. That's why I recommend that you do not eat astragalus when you are sick.

Chinese herbalists sell bundles of astragalus roots. You can cook it in with your favorite soups and stews to get its immune-supporting benefits. It will even add a slightly sweet taste. (The cooked root is too tough to chew, so, like cooking with bay leaf, discard it after cooking.)

There are also some good astragalus supplements. I recommend either Zand Astragalus (Deep Toning) Formula with herbal synergist (www.zand.com) or Planetary Formulas Full Spectrum Astragalus Extract (www.planetaryherbals.com). Both contain ingredients that enhance immune response by promoting healthy cytokine levels and support the body's own interferon production. Take 20–40 drops a day (which translates to 1–2 dropperfuls 2–3 times a day).

You can also find good astragalus products in tablet, capsule, or glycerite form if alcohol tincture extraction is not for you. These supplements are available in health food stores (For the two products listed above, visit their company Web sites to locate a retailer near you).

As with anything anymore, astragalus comes with a caution for pregnant women, breast-feeding mothers, and young children—not because of any known problems, but because it hasn't been studied in these cases to determine if there is or isn't a problem. It's also recommended that you not use it if you are currently sick or have a fever because it works by sealing your body. Thus, it can keep your body from expelling what you have if you're already sick. However, it has no reported adverse effects when used as directed.

For prevention, it should be taken for several weeks to months before the beginning of the cold and flu season. Cook with three to five of the dried

roots each day, or follow the directions on the label if you use the supplement form.

A SUMMARY OF IMMUNE-BOOSTING MEASURES

- ▶ Wash your hands regularly. Keep alcohol-based hand wipes in the car for everyone to use. Don't touch your face without clean hands—particularly avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- ▶ Take a warm shower and scrub your skin several times a week to open pores that flush out poisons, fats, wastes, viruses, and bacteria. When you've finished your invigorating rubbing and scrubbing, shower in cooler water to close your pores and seal in heat—which will make you less prone to a winter chill. Use a lotion to keep your skin strong and moist.
- ▶ Exercise regularly to keep wastes moving out and nutrients pumping in. The heat you generate while exercising can help kill pathogens while energizing your cells and metabolism for improved health. Exercise is the best mood elevator, stress-buster, and immune regulator.
- ▶ Keep your bowels and bladder moving forward. If they slow down or stop, pathogens may grow and infest—not because they're strong, but because your body has become weak. The solution is simple—when nature calls, answer by going to the toilet.
- ▶ Improve hygiene after going to the toilet by using a washlet instead of wiping. The washlet fits on your toilet just like the seat you have now, but it comes equipped to efficiently clean and dry you. I recommend the Brondell Swash (www.Brondell.com or 888.542.3355). It has two built-in and hidden retractable water wands that will hygienically clean your posterior or feminine areas with a warm stream of fresh water. All washlets have similar characteristics, but Brondell (named after the man who invented the flush toilet) has perfected the washlet for American households by providing a simple, functional, sturdy, and comfortable design that is truly easy to install and use.

- ▶ Drink plenty of fluids—especially clean water. Dehydration is one of the most common ways to unnecessarily get sick. If your nose or throat dries out and is without mucus, you are easy prey for the predatory pathogens. Drink water or tea every half hour or so—particularly when traveling. I carry lozenges—either green tea, licorice, elderberry, or mint—to keep my mouth and throat moist. Ricola's are just fine!
- ▶ Get plenty of deep sleep so your immune system can go through its restorative process. Sleep is an essential part of a healthy life.
- ▶ Avoid refined foods and simple sugars. They lower immunity and make your response sluggish. Eating these processed and nutritionally empty products is like setting the table for microbes to come and eat on you!
- ▶ Finally, keep a window cracked to allow a flow of fresh air to circulate. Proper circulation prevents sickness while stagnant air lets microbes linger and grow. Don't get chilled, but don't get cooped up either. It's better to put on a sweater than sit inside a climate-controlled closed house or office.

Healing Your Body From Flu and Cold

Of course, sometimes a particularly persistent strain of virus will take hold and cause you to come down with a cold or flu despite your best precautions. When this happens, there are some effective ways to speed you along the road to recovery.

Many people in the US already know about taking echinacea to ward off or shorten the duration of colds and flu, so you may have been surprised by negative research published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. However, I've looked at that study and discovered that it has some serious flaws. First, the strain of rhinovirus they used for the research was one of the rarest, least studied, and least understood varieties of "the common cold." Second, the researchers used a private preparation of echinacea rather than something commercially available. Finally, the dosing levels were probably

Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones with Surgical Masks

When you feel you have a cold or flu, I recommend buying a stash of surgical masks to wear in public and encourage family and friends to do so as well. On one of my last trips to Asia, the person next to me was coughing from the moment he sat down. I asked the flight attendant for a mask, and wore it the whole way over. It's time to adopt public health measures used by the rest of the industrialized world.

My favorite is a product called the Nano-Mask by Emergency Filtration. It's able to filter out small particles even better than the N95 masks you may have heard about. Plus, it's impregnated with particles that allow the mask to deal with both inhaled air (which protects you) and exhaled air (which protects those around you). The mask is available from several distributors around the country. Go to www.EmergencyFiltration.com/NanoMask.html to get in touch with a particular distributor.

too low. The study used 900 mg per day (which is a lower dosage than the 1.2 to 3 grams that is often recommended), yet the erroneous conclusion was paraded around in the mainstream news media as the final word on echinacea.

I won't extol the benefits of echinacea here since you've probably heard them before. I will say, however, that I believe the proper forms of echinacea taken in adequate amounts can be effective for addressing most forms of rhinovirus. It is not a cure-all by any means, but it certainly has merit and a place in healing. With that said, there are some other herbal cold and flu therapies that I believe are even more effective. Let's take a closer look at these proven flu fighters.

OSCILLOCOCCINUM: THE \$5 SOLUTION

One of my top recommendations for treating flu is a homeopathic remedy from France called Oscillococcinum. (Don't worry about saying the

name; the store clerk likely won't be able to pronounce it either.) Its raw material comes from ducks, which makes me believe that it would be particularly effective against any bird flu that did break out. Oscillococcinum is also clinically proven to work and very inexpensive (you can find it for around \$5).

It is a smart and effective form of oral immunization right from the source of so many viruses in our environment, waterways, and fowl.

Oscillococcinum works best if you begin taking it at the very first sign of flu, so you'll want to have a three-dose package on hand. You can find oscillococcinum in drug stores and health food stores. Take as directed. For more information, or to locate a retailer near you, visit www.oscillo.com.

ANDROGRAPHIS

Andrographis paniculata is new to us in the US, but it's enjoyed long use in Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine for the treatment of colds and flu. In fact, it has been credited with stopping the influenza epidemic in India back in 1919.

In human clinical trials, it has been effective for both adults and children in alleviating many cold and flu symptoms—including sore throat, nasal discharge, coughing, fever, fatigue, sleeplessness, headaches, sinus pain, and muscle soreness. And, in a double-blind and placebo-controlled study, dosages of 1,200 mg a day significantly shortened the duration of the common cold.

The majority of research on andrographis comes from the Swedish Herbal Institute. Their product, Kan Jang, contains their SHA-10 extract—an andrographis leaf extract standardized to six percent total andrographolides and deoxyandrographolides. Planetary Formulas also makes a product called Andrographis Full Spectrum. I like them both. You will need to take two tablets of this product twice a day to equal the dosage used in the double-blind study.

It is also warned that people who have esophageal reflux, peptic ulcers, or acute diarrhea not use andrographis. I highly recommend andrographis

(Continued on page 8)

Cold and Flu Basics

It seems everyone has their favorite remedy for colds and flu. Here are some of the ones that have become more widely known over the past few years:

Zinc—Low levels are associated with decreased numbers of T cells and the impairment of many cellular functions. The most convenient way to get additional zinc is to suck on zinc gluconate lozenges every two hours. You can also try a nasal gel called Zicam. You'll get benefits no matter when you start using it. However, large doses of zinc are not for long-term use, but regular multivitamin level consumption properly balanced with copper can reward your immunity.

Elderberry—Promotes the production of cytokines, molecules that are part of the immune response. Elderberry extract, available commercially as Sambucol, can shorten both the severity and the duration of a bout of flu. Take 2 teaspoons four times daily while you're feeling symptoms.

Saline nasal wash—This works wonders to clear out congested sinus and nasal passages. There are neti pots and other devices available to help you do this, but a very simple method is to mix a pinch of salt into some warm water in the palm of your hand, and sniff some of the solution as deeply as you can into each nostril.

Vitamin C—High doses appear to help alleviate cold symptoms. Vitamin C inhibits histamine, so it helps ease a stuffy, runny nose. It also has antiviral properties, so it actually attacks the source of the problem. Take at least 1,000 mg three times a day. If you notice that your stools begin to loosen, cut back on your dosage and work back up slowly.

Hot ginger or green tea with fresh ginger and lemon—Hot fluids have a mild decongestant effect, which helps relieve nasal stuffiness.

And here are some specific supplements I recommend. Look for them in health food stores.

- **Esberitox** by Enzymatic Therapy is a tasty, chewable combination of two echinacea extracts, plus *Thuja occidentalis* and *Baptisia tinctoria*. This leading immune product from Germany is backed with over 30 clinical trials and studies, and is better than Echinacea alone. It also relieves sore throats by delivering potent extracts to the throat where it's needed most. Chew 3 tablets three times a day, for adults.
- **Lomatium** is the "big medicine" of the Great Basin country (between the Rockies and the Sierras). Its root was traditionally used by Native Americans who inhabited that area, and it has a history of use in viral infections. Lomatium is often teamed up in products with osha, and it contains resins that broadly strengthen the immune response and can prevent the flu from becoming pneumonia. Eclectic Institute offers a quality Lomatium and Osha throat spray—use three to ten times a day as needed.
- **North American ginseng** (*Panax quinquefolius*) can be used to reduce the frequency and duration of cold and flu symptoms. I recommend COLD-fX, a highly purified and patented extract derived from North American ginseng. In a placebo-controlled, double-blind clinical trial, this product reduced the relative risk of flu and respiratory infections in 323 middle-aged adults. It also significantly reduced the recurrence of respiratory infections in 198 seniors with daily administration for four months. Each capsule contains 200 mg of standardized extract. Take two capsules a day.
- **N-Acetylcysteine (NAC)** is effective in preventing illness. It also reduces symptoms and severity of colds and flu if you get sick. This antioxidant is widely used for chronic bronchitis in Europe since it's a natural expectorant to clear the lungs. Take 1,000 mg three times a day.

(Continued from page 6)

to counteract infections through a combination of antiviral, immunostimulating, and anti-inflammatory actions. If taken at early onset, it may help prevent a full outbreak in over half the patients with symptoms—thus leading to a significantly quicker recovery. If taken for a longer term (two to three months), it has a preventive effect.

OLIVE LEAF

Olive leaf (*Olea europaea*) continues to be an Old World favorite full of modern wonder. Recent work shows its benefits for the heart and circulation, and as far back as the 1960s, olive leaf extract has been known as a potent antimicrobial agent with efficacy against bacterial as well as viral invaders. More recent research has shown that it is specifically the oleuropein and calcium elenolate components of olive leaf that can inactivate viruses that cause colds and flu by preventing viral reproduction and by blocking the spread of infection to uninfected cells. What's more, olive leaf extract stops viruses of many kinds—including herpes, influenza, rhinovirus, and others. While it's toxic to pathogens, it is safe for children to take. Nature's Way Olive Leaf Extract is standardized to 12 percent oleuropein and blended with whole herb. Take 1–2 capsules two times a day. You can find Nature's Way Olive Leaf Extract in your local health food stores.

SCHIZANDRA

As I mentioned earlier, adaptogens are great immune supporters. But one in particular can also

be used for cold and flu treatment. Schizandra has been shown to help control coughing, increase body fluid production, and normalize bowel function—all of which can be of great comfort when dealing with a cold or flu. Schizandra is an important medicinal herb and food in traditional Chinese medicine. I recommend Schizandra Fruit caps from Nature's Way. It's the real deal, providing wild-harvested schizandra from Northern China. Take 2 capsules three times a day with food. Look for it in your local health food stores.

★ ★ ★

As I close this report, I leave you with a few final thoughts. First, please don't buy into all the hype surrounding the "bird flu." If you believed all the fuss you'd think every sneeze was a potential killer. To quote former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin, "Public fear and bad information could all too easily snowball into panic."

Second, pathogens are everywhere—in the air we breathe, the foods we eat, and the things we touch. Strong natural immunity and a hygienic lifestyle are still your best medicine. Staying healthy is an active enterprise, and I want to help you be naturally well today and every day.

To your good health,

Dr. Marcus Laux

Dr. Marcus Laux

Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

50 Times Stronger: Top Secret New Cures

IN THIS SPECIAL REPORT

Benefit From the Healing
Power of Glutathione 1

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In this report, I will show you how evolving technology and scientific research can make some of natural medicine's traditional supplements 50 times stronger than they've ever been before. Let's start by taking a look at what

is arguably the most important antioxidant for your continued well-being and how new technology can improve its delivery into your body.

Benefit From the Healing Power of Glutathione

Glutathione is truly one of the wonders of Nature. It's multifunctional and indispensable to health, longevity, and even life itself. It is a significant component of our immune system, without which we could not survive.

It's a string of three amino acids—glutamine, cysteine, and glycine—and it's made by all the cells in our body (as programmed by our DNA). It affects prostaglandin and leukotriene metabolism, influences protein and DNA synthesis, and helps maintain proper structure and function of proteins and enzymes—including the protective antioxidant enzymes.

The important form is called "reduced glutathione" (or GSH); it's vital to the proper function of our cells, and it's critical to minimizing attacks from free radicals that damage healthy tissues. For instance, as a powerful antioxidant, GSH protects our red blood cells from the very oxygen they were designed to carry. It can even ward off the hydroxyls from radiation—one of the most potent free radicals known.

REDOX TO DETOX

When it comes to detoxifying the body, GSH is superb. It's used by the body to protect us from just about every toxic element—including pollution, poisons, drugs, and heavy metals. In this role, GSH effectively neutralizes contaminants, is a dominant player in phase two detoxification in the liver, protects against the ravages of DNA damage (whether in the skin, eye, blood, or brain), and is a chelating agent that helps remove heavy metals.

Another significant and rarely understood factor with GSH is that it's the primary antioxidant powerhouse maintaining the oxidation-reduction (or "redox") potential that is a hallmark of healthy cells. The redox potential is essentially the cell's ability to reduce oxidation and maintain internal balance by neutralizing free radicals. This process is very real and necessary since a normal cell is subjected to thousands of free radical hits a day. Our cells have developed an intrinsic and intricate antioxidant recycling and regenerating system to handle these free radicals and their potential damage. If the redox potential is fully functional, the hits are neutralized, the damage is repaired, and our antioxidant system is recycled and reloaded—no problem. However, if proper redox potential is impaired, DNA mutations are not repaired, damage accumulates, and compromised health ensues. The likely results are inflammation, fibrosis, and sclerosis, all of which can lead to cell death and/or cancer.

Concerning cancer, the redox balance within a cell is a critical influence on the functioning of the p53 tumor-suppressing protein that helps prevent and kill cancer cells. For example, if a cell develops a DNA mutation, this p53 suppressor protein slows down the growth cycle so that repair processes can mend any

genetic damage. In essence, a potentially pre-cancerous cell is cured and made normal. If it can't repair the damage, it programs the cell for self-destruction—called apoptosis. However, if there is a lack of GSH, then the function of the p53 protein is actually altered so that it no longer suppresses tumor potential. In fact, it actually promotes tumor growth.

The role of GSH in cancer prevention and health promotion cannot be overlooked. Ensuring that you have adequate GSH levels can have a positive influence against tumor formation and progression. Test tube and animal studies bear out its potential in preventing carcinogens from creating cancer and in healing precancerous cells.

All normal and healthy cellular function is dependent on a balanced redox potential. The proteins that regulate gene expression are highly influenced by GSH levels and redox ability. As we know from the genome project, certain diseases are brought forth due to which sets of genes are being expressed—or which sets are “turned on.” Under optimal conditions, cancer genes, diabetes genes, or heart disease gene sequences are turned off—but they may be activated under adverse conditions. So, it's not about whether you have a gene for a particular disease or not, it's really a matter of whether that gene is expressing itself. When GSH is inadequate, the proteins shift and malfunction, and unhealthy and dangerous gene messages may be activated. We can create either health or disease with this primordial protein fragment.

BIOMARKERS OF GOOD HEALTH

When we consider the full spectrum of health and disease, there are several simple and profound facts that stand out about the healthiest people:

- ▶ They have bodies with more water content and less fat storage;
- ▶ They eat more nutritionally complex and dense foods;
- ▶ They exercise regularly;
- ▶ They have a positive outlook on life; and
- ▶ They have higher GSH levels.

This last point is significant. It's been found that an adequate level of GSH is the best biomarker for good health. In one review, almost 80 percent of people with chronic ailments were found to be deficient in GSH. In fact, low levels of GSH are involved in most all disease states—including AIDS, arthritis,

diabetes, hypertension, respiratory disease, kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, neurological disease, eye disease, liver disease, and cancer.

We also know that alcoholics and drug addicts have low GSH levels—though it's unlikely that low GSH caused their addictions. Rather, the substance abuse most likely caused their GSH levels to decline—undoubtedly contributing to additional health problems to come.

“REDUCED GLUTATHIONE” IS NOT “DIMINISHED GLUTATHIONE”

As I mentioned earlier, GSH refers to “reduced glutathione” (the form that is functionally protective). The name may make it sound as if the glutathione has diminished capabilities, but in this case “reduced” means that it's capable of attaching an electron to a free radical in order to stabilize it. It is this free-radical quenching ability that gives GSH its healing power. Once GSH donates an electron, it is considered “oxidized” and it can't help us again until it gets regenerated by quickly picking up an electron from one of the other antioxidants with which it works closely—such as vitamin E, selenium, alpha lipoic acid, and flavonoids. If it can't regenerate, the oxidized GSH is transported out of the body as waste.

Until now, we could try to improve our GSH levels through either an IV infusion or in a roundabout fashion of secondary supplements and diet to help the body produce more GSH on its own. N-acetylcysteine (NAC), whey protein, specific amino acid supplements (such as cysteine), and other antioxidants have played a role in improving GSH levels and activity. Following the best protocols, these supplements helped in some cases, but with a lot of effort. Taking GSH orally did not prove to be effective since it was deactivated by the GI tract. But, today's liposomal technology delivery vehicle can ensure this intrinsic DNA-mandated defense gets in without being deactivated.

WHAT'S A LIPOSOME?

A liposome is a cell-like membrane with a fat-soluble exterior and a watery, gel-like interior. The GSH liposome is made from soy lecithin, a phospholipid that's exactly like what is found in human cells. The liposome delivery system (with its proven high absorbability) can keep the enclosed GSH intact and protected until it breaks down after it's absorbed by

body cells and tissues. This liquid contains exactly miniature nanospheres of liposomes sized between 100 and 500 nanometers. Using this technology, human studies show over a 90 percent absorption rate.

I learned of this new form of delivering GSH from a close relative's ongoing health challenge. I'm using liposomal GSH in my relative's case due to its known benefit in helping with seizure disorders. Its influence on other neurological diseases is well-documented as well—including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. What's more, it has been shown to have favorable results as an aid in treating autism, cystic fibrosis, heart disease, hypertension, liver disorders, prostate problems, and lung disease—and the list is continually expanding.

I am using a product called LipoCeutical Glutathione. It does not require a prescription. While I've yet to see research demonstrating this GSH product in clinical trials, what has gotten my attention is the growing numbers of doctors who have run ongoing laboratory levels with patients, and who have documented the positive patient improvements. The neurologist I'm working with for my relative has validated this to my satisfaction.

I would consider using GSH on an ongoing basis for recovery. Patients should cycle through a program of using it for one to two months, two times a year—spring and fall—and whenever stress factors increase. You can purchase LipoCeutical Glutathione from BrainChild Nutritionals (831-465-0104 or www.brainchildnutritionals.com).

A New Way to Get Your Omega-3s

The value of including fish in our diet has finally taken hold in the last 10 years or so, and we've come a long way from those frozen, fried fish sticks so popular in the 1970s. It continues to surprise me that it took so long for this incredibly healthy food to enter our collective awareness and grace our tables. Fish has a well-deserved reputation for being very valuable to overall health. It has been touted as "brain food," a heart guardian, and a skin rejuvenator through the ages. It has also been considered an essential component of joint health.

The oil found in fish is what promotes good health, and its key components are called omega-3 essential fatty acids (EFAs). Strictly speaking,

"essential" means that the body cannot make something or convert it from any other raw material, so it must come from our diet. EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) are the two EFAs found in fish—and fish oil supplements. DHA is crucial for the brain, and is highly concentrated in parts of the brain that require high degrees of electrical activity. DHA is also needed in high amounts in the mitochondria, your cells' "powerplants."

When I started talking about omega-3 fats more than 30 years ago, there was no media coverage of them, and virtually no products were available. Now fish oil supplements are available in most any health food or grocery store. Unfortunately, finding a good quality fish oil product can be difficult. Fish oil can easily oxidize and become rancid—which is actually dangerous to your health. Also, some fish oil products don't allow the beneficial omega-3s to effectively enter into your body.

Fortunately, there is a brand-new product in Europe that eliminates these concerns. I call it *50x Omega* because preliminary research shows that the EPA and DHA in this product is absorbed 50 times better compared to standard fish oil. I also believe this product is superior to standard fish oil because of the special, patented process used to create it.

While most traditional fish oil supplements are manufactured by using heat, solvents, and chemical modifications to extract the oil from fish, *50x Omega* removes the oil with a method that uses a process involving cold water and natural enzymes. This means the EPA and DHA are not only more bioavailable, but also very stable and pure—just the way they occur in nature. This exciting new product is just now making its way into the US. I'll be sure to provide you with details about where you can purchase it in upcoming issues of *Naturally Well Today*.

Probiotics That Are Alive and Well

When you tally together all the people who have autoimmune diseases, it's clear that there is an epidemic in this country. These diseases take numerous forms and have a variety of names—Addison's disease, autoimmune hepatitis, Crohn's disease, type 1 diabetes, Graves' disease, lupus erythematosus, multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis, optic neuritis, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, and many more. All of them are the

result of the body having an immune response against itself—and all can be improved or prevented by enhancing the body's digestive process.

More than 400 varieties of good bacteria or microflora grow in our intestines. Some are destroyers, others support and promote good health—especially lactobacillus (*L. acidophilus* and *L. bulgaricus*) and bifidobacteria (*L. bifidum* and *B. longum*). In the digestive tract, bacterial “flora” manufacture lactic acid and antibiotic-like substances that help keep the “bad guys” in check, produce B-complex vitamins, and render carcinogens harmless. So if you want to enhance digestion, it makes good sense to nurture, protect, and respect these “good” guys. One way to do this is to eat foods like yogurt and kefir that contain these bacteria.

You can also replenish good bacteria by taking probiotics, the supplemental form of good bacteria. Probiotics can provide the following digestive benefits:

- ▶ Improve immune balance by supplementing friendly, live beneficial bacteria;
- ▶ Protect intestinal walls and optimize nutrient absorption;
- ▶ Produce lactic acid that discourages growth of bad bacteria in the gut;
- ▶ Help break down undigested food; and
- ▶ Neutralize toxins made during digestion.

Keeping these bacteria alive has been a real challenge for manufacturers—studies in both Europe and the US have shown that of the many probiotic products available, only a select few actually contain beneficial levels of living organisms. Hands down, the single best refrigerated product I've seen with living bacteria is Bio-K Plus. It's a long-standing Canadian product. (I've enjoyed it myself for years.) And now it's available in the US, although distribution is currently limited to select stores on the West Coast. It's like a hearty yogurt that guarantees 50 billion live cells per 3.3-ounce bottle. It works quickly on your intestinal tract, with marvelous healing and soothing effects. A little goes a long way. In fact, one container holds four servings. So, although it is a little more expensive than traditional yogurt, it has an excellent health promoting value. For more information

on Bio-K Plus and a list of stores that carry it, go online to www.biokplus.com.

Until now, refrigerated probiotics were the only reliable products. Fortunately, there is a new technology that has significantly improved the quality of probiotic supplements—and the only non-refrigerated one I recommend. It is a patented Japanese “seamless” encapsulation process in which the probiotics are encased in a triple-layered capsule or beadlet. Live bacteria powder is surrounded by a layer of vegetable oil, then coated with an acid-resistant shell of gelatin and pectin. This fat/gelatin/pectin layering seals off the bacteria from the damaging effects of oxygen and protects it from the acidic environment of the stomach. It also ensures that the bacteria are delivered alive to the intestinal tract. One probiotic product that uses this technology is Enzymatic Therapy's Acidophilus Pearls, available in health food stores. Visit www.enzy.com or call 800-783-2286 to find a store near you that sells it.

Probiotics should be taken 30 minutes before or two hours after a meal to ensure unimpeded delivery to your intestines. The two primary mistakes people make when they first begin re-seeding healthful bacteria are buying a product that doesn't work and taking acidophilus and other probiotics with food. Making sure the probiotics you buy contain live organisms and taking them on an empty stomach should help you avoid these common pitfalls.

★ ★ ★

As the world continues to evolve and new scientific discoveries unfold in the natural health arena, I will share them with you in *Naturally Well Today*. In the meantime, I hope you have enjoyed this glimpse into some of today's latest—and greatest—natural health breakthroughs and that you will use what you have learned in this report to better your health naturally—today and every day.

To Your Good Health,



Dr. Marcus Laux

Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

The "Best of the Best" Natural Cancer Fighters

IN THIS SPECIAL REPORT

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One of the biggest health concerns facing the world today is cancer—a disease that turns the body against itself. It seems like every day I hear about the rising statistics or learn that someone I know has lost

the battle against this insidious disease.

No single therapy—conventional or other—is guaranteed to cure cancer, but knowing your options can empower you to make better choices if ever faced with a diagnosis. Knowing your options, making informed decisions, and committing your mind, body, and soul greatly improves your chances of surviving this life-threatening disease.

In this report, I will outline steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones from one of the most prevalent cancers in the United States today—as well as cancer in general. I will also tell you about a powerful complementary therapy that can help you fight cancer.

Boost Your Cancer-Fighting Power—Naturally

There is no single therapy—conventional or other—that is guaranteed to cure cancer. And, if you or someone you know has been battling

cancer, I am sure you are familiar with conventional treatments, such as surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. You probably also know that these treatments can be highly toxic to your body and can lead to negative side effects, such as hair loss, nausea, and lack of energy, to name a few.

In contrast to conventional methods of fighting cancer, natural therapies are based on the premise that a healthy immune system is the strongest weapon against degenerative disease. Similarly, it is better to nourish and strengthen the immune system than to use poisonous agents that destroy both healthy and cancerous cells. Lifestyle factors such as proper diet and nutrient supplementation are two of the mainstays of natural medicine, particularly with regard to preventing and treating cancer. Now I want to tell you about another way you can naturally boost your cancer-fighting power.

THE 6X BREAKTHROUGH

One of the most common complementary cancer therapies is the use of medicinal mushrooms. While many doctors in other countries use extracts of these mushrooms as primary cancer therapies, doctors and other healthcare practitioners in the US use them as nutritional therapies (and often alongside conventional cancer treatments).

The reason mushrooms are so effective against cancer is because they contain substances called

beta-glucans. Research has shown that these beta-glucans stimulate the production of immune cells that are responsible for not only protecting the body from foreign invaders but also protecting it from its own aberrant cells (cancer).

There are several types of mushrooms that have been shown to significantly improve and strengthen immune response and also increase production of the body's natural cancer-fighting agents. In the past, the only way to experience the cancer-fighting and immune-boosting benefits of these mushrooms was to purchase separate extracts of each one. But now, researchers have found an effective way to combine the power of these mushrooms into one capsule.

Immune Fx contains high concentrations of beta-glucans extracted from six of the most powerful medicinal mushrooms available today: *Agaricus blazei* Murill (ABM), *Coriolus versicolor*, maitake, *Cordyceps sinensis*, reishi, and shiitake. This specially-formulated supplement is meant to be taken in conjunction with surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy. Some research even suggests that Immune Fx can help reduce many of the undesirable side effects associated with these conventional therapies. Immune Fx is also useful for anyone who wants to naturally boost their immune system.

Before you start taking Immune Fx you should talk to your physician. The suggested dose is 2–6 capsules per day. You can purchase Immune Fx at pharmacies and health food stores. For more information or to find a retailer near you, call 866-334-2463.

The Many Faces of Fruits and Veggies

I'm sure you know that a healthy diet should include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Antioxidant-rich plant foods ward off nearly every type of disease—including cancer. Vitamins C, E, A, and K, selenium, and carotenoids are just a few of the significant "soldiers" that

Which Mushrooms?

Extensive research has confirmed the immune-response and cancer-fighting properties of six mushrooms. These findings are:

1. *Agaricus blazei* Murill (ABM)—Found to increase number of cancer-fighting cells by 3000 percent in as little as 2 days.
2. *Coriolus versicolor*—Successfully tested against breast, colon, and lung tumors, adenocarcinoma, fibrosarcoma, mastocytoma, plasmacytoma, and melanoma.
3. Maitake—Shows special promise against breast, liver, and lung cancer.
4. *Cordyceps sinensis*—Shown to strengthen immune system and organs after they've been battered by cancer and conventional treatments. Boosts heart, lung, liver, and kidney functioning.
5. Reishi—Helps with side effects of chemotherapy and radiation. Boosts red blood cell count and strengthens immune system.
6. Shiitake—Stimulates natural killer cells. Influences action of lymphocytes (white blood cells responsible for immune system activities).

fight cancer-causing free-radical damage. These are only a small portion of the nutrients that can be found in fruits and vegetables.

However, a substantial amount of scientific evidence indicates that not all fruits and vegetables are created equal—each one has its own unique nutrient spectrum. For example, tomatoes and watermelons are the richest sources of lycopene, while orange vegetables corner the market on beta-carotene. Dark, leafy greens are bursting with vitamins C and E, magnesium, and calcium, to name a few. Ultimately, your long-term health is dependent on a nutrient-dense, antioxidant-intense diet, and the best way to get this is by eating a variety of nutrient-rich fruits and veggies.

One not-so-popular vegetable group is the cruciferous family. This group includes broccoli, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, cress, kale,

radish, turnip, kohlrabi, cabbage, and cauliflower. According to a US Department of Agriculture survey, these vegetables were consumed least—82 percent of Americans said they didn't eat them.

This is unfortunate because extensive epidemiology studies have shown that daily consumption of cruciferous vegetables consistently reduces the occurrence of various cancers. This is likely due to the fact that cruciferous vegetables contain significant levels of the nutrients found to decrease the effects of cancer-causing chemicals. More specifically:

- ▶ **Sulforaphane** acts as a powerful detoxifying agent.
- ▶ **Isothiocyanates** support healthy DNA.
- ▶ **Chalcones and isoflavones** support healthy reproductive tissue and function.
- ▶ **Indole carbinols** have been shown to promote and support a stable, healthy estrogen balance. Indole-3 carbinol (I3C) is found in broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables. When these vegetables are crushed, chewed, or exposed to stomach acid, I3C is converted into diindolylmethane (DIM).

DIM—A Cancer-Fighting Superstar

DIM has shown great promise as an anti-cancer agent. It is 10 times more potent than I3C and is very safe. It has the unique ability to affect your hormonal environment, specifically by lowering the levels of harmful estrogens that promote tumor growth in hormone-sensitive cells for both men and women. Understanding the beneficial actions of I3C and DIM requires a quick review of how estrogens can put the body at risk for disease.

BALANCE ESTROGEN IN YOUR FAVOR

DIM's most remarkable property is its ability to modify the metabolism of estrogen. It can

Reduce Harmful Hormone Exposure

You can't control environmental pollution, which is a major contributor to harmful estrogens. However, you *can* control your diet, and, in the process, protect yourself from the risks of excess estrogen exposure.

One of the bigger risks of exposure to foreign estrogens and other harmful chemicals comes from food. By some estimates, animal products are responsible for roughly 75 percent of the harmful hormones in the average diet. By eating organic fruits and vegetables and hormone-free, grass-fed animal products, you can significantly decrease your exposure to synthetic hormones, pesticides, and other drugs, as well as substantially increase your intake of protective vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Research reported in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* noted that organic crops contained significantly more vitamin C, iron, magnesium, and phosphorus, and significantly less nitrates, than conventional crops. The study noted a 372 percent increase in selenium content in the organic version over the conventional one! It also showed that organics contained a better quality and higher content of other nutritionally significant materials, with lower amounts of some heavy metals.

I know that "going organic" can be a bit more costly, but it's an expense that could save your life and the lives of those you love. If you want to begin slowly, start with dairy and meat products, which contain more fat-soluble pesticides than fruits, vegetables, and grains. Then, buy organic vegetables and fruit. Some types of produce contain more toxins than others. Strawberries, cherries, apples, grapes, and oranges, especially, are often contaminated by multiple pesticides and consistently show some of the highest levels of pesticide residue. Non-organic broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, and sweet potatoes consistently appear to be the least contaminated.

actually increase the ratio of “good” estrogen to “bad.” Estrogens have many beneficial roles in the body, including regulating and promoting healthy functioning of the reproductive system in men and women; maintaining the structure of the skin, blood vessels, and bones; and regulating various metabolic processes. However, excessive or prolonged exposure to estrogens and xenoestrogens (foreign estrogens) can cause serious health problems. Certain estrogen metabolites are directly linked to the development of several types of cancer, most notably breast (for both men and women), prostate, ovarian, cervical, and uterine cancers.

The term “estrogen” actually refers to three hormones found in the body: estrone, estradiol, and estriol. All three undergo conversion in the liver, with estradiol and estrone ultimately converting to 16-alpha-hydroxylated estrone, the hormone associated with cancer development. It turns out that DIM is metabolized through the same liver pathway as the estrogens, and it promotes healthy estrogen metabolism through this process. DIM actually helps the body convert estrogen breakdown products into friendly and protective end products, such as 2-hydroxyestrone.

This beneficial estrogen metabolite functions as an antioxidant in the body; promoting normal elimination of damaged cells, supporting the development of healthy bone, protecting the heart and brain, and enhancing apoptosis (normal programmed cell death). Conversely, low levels of this “good” estrogen have been associated with obesity and a lack of essential fatty acids.

DIM can also help with disorders related to sex hormones such as pre-menstrual syndrome, fibroids, endometriosis, and heavy menstrual periods. Similarly, DIM has assisted women in dealing with symptoms of perimenopause and menopause, and it can help men who want to promote prostate health and sexual vitality. Although estrogen is usually considered a female

hormone, men have small amounts used to produce healthy sperm, among other functions. Furthermore, as men age, their estrogen levels rise, and DIM's role becomes even more significant.

WHAT RESEARCH SHOWS

The majority of cancer research on humans has been conducted using the precursor to DIM—I3C—which converts to DIM in the stomach. In a study involving 30 patients with stage II and stage III cervical cancer, participants were given I3C or a placebo as an adjunct therapy. (The women continued conventional therapies). After 12 weeks, the placebo group showed no change. Of the 10 women given 200 mg of I3C, four showed complete remission. Complete remission was also noted for four women who were given 400 mg of I3C.

In another study conducted by the Institute for Hormone Research, 60 women took 400 mg of I3C each day for 12 weeks. Using urine samples, researchers showed that during the 12 weeks, the women's production of 2-hydroxyestrone increased, suggesting that I3C may function as a preventive against breast cancer.

In human trials, DIM has been shown to increase the production of 2-hydroxyestrone at the same rate as I3C, but DIM shows no sign of side effects, even at high doses. Also, in an *in vitro* study conducted specifically on DIM, it inhibited the growth of breast cancer cells in a concentrated and timely manner.

THE SAFETY OF DIM

DIM has been well-studied and used for many years with no reported side effects. Its use in animal studies at hundreds of times the amount found in dietary supplements produced no adverse effects. DIM is not recommended for nursing or lactating mothers, however, because research has not yet focused on this area.

DIM is not an estrogen or hormone, so it will not negatively affect overall hormone balance. Your urine color could change with the use of DIM, but

this is natural and harmless. The color reflects the presence of amber-colored metabolites. Drinking plenty of water will eliminate this problem. Some individuals also experience minor stomach upset, but taking DIM with food often helps.

HOW TO GET MORE DIM

There are three basic ways to increase your levels of DIM:

- 1) Supplement with I3C
- 2) Eat more cruciferous vegetables
- 3) Supplement with a bio-available form of DIM

Even though I3C is available in supplemental form, it's not my first recommendation. As I mentioned above, I3C requires activation in the stomach to be converted to DIM. This means it must be taken at much higher amounts and can undergo unpredictable and undesirable chemical reactions in your stomach or colon.

As I already mentioned, eating cruciferous vegetables can reduce your risk of cancer. Even for die-hard cruciferous consumers, it's fairly difficult to consume enough vegetables in sufficient quantities to consistently affect estrogen metabolism. A good plan would be to combine your sources of DIM. For instance, incorporate more cruciferous vegetables into your diet (giving you the full spectrum of nutrient benefits—not just DIM) and begin taking a bio-available DIM supplement.

Absorbable DIM gives your body what it needs in smaller doses of the form it needs. Look for supplemental DIM in bio-available preparations, preferably ones supported by both animal and clinical studies. Two products I recommend are DIM by Bioresponse (www.bioresponse.com; 877-312-5777) and Indolplex by Tyler Encapsulation (www.needs.com; 800-634-1380). As a preventive measure, women should take 60 mg of absorbable DIM and men should take 120 mg, each day, in divided doses.

Protect Yourself from Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in the US. Thankfully, it is very preventable, and readily treatable and curable if you catch it early enough. Regular examinations are painless and quick, so have a full body exam by a board-certified dermatologist or your physician once a year. You can also keep watch yourself for suspicious areas. This guide is likely not new to you, but a reminder can't hurt:

- ▶ **Asymmetry** (any mole that isn't round)
- ▶ **Borders** (benign moles have regular borders; cancerous growths often have rough edges)
- ▶ **Color** (any mole that changes color, or appears blue, red, or white)
- ▶ **Diameter** (anything larger than a pencil eraser, or that has grown recently)

Even though I'm a physician, I've had suspicions about skin growths that turned out to be benign; others that I dismissed myself were flagged for treatment or put on the watch list. Don't be shy about bringing something to the attention of a skin specialist—it could save your life.

Fortunately, photo-aging, skin cancers, and other adverse sun effects (e.g. lupus symptoms) are mostly preventable with sun protection that is practiced consistently from early childhood.

SKIN UNDER ATTACK

The sun's energy is a mixed bag of radiation, which reaches us in waves of varying lengths. The shortest wavelengths are gamma radiation; then come x-rays, ultraviolet light (the one that concerns us the most for our skin), visible light, and infrared radiation. Ultraviolet (UV) is further divided into UVA, UVB, and UVC.

The UVC are the most potentially dangerous, as they have the highest energy, and so are the most likely to cause cellular damage when they

hit your skin. Fortunately, they are almost completely screened out by the atmospheric ozone layer. UVB rays are next in energy. These rays can penetrate the skin's epidermis and stimulate the melanocytes to produce melanin, the coveted darker color of a tan. (They are also responsible for a less desirable skin color—the fiery red of a sunburn.) It's the UVBs that are primarily involved with skin cancer formation—specifically melanoma and, in combination with UVA rays, basal cell carcinoma. UVB rays can also depress the immune system.

While clouds only moderately reduce UVB's travels, the good news is that clothes and glass wipe most of them out. Watch out for exposure to reflective surfaces such as water, snow, sand, and even concrete, however; you can substantially increase your exposure without knowing it. Outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy swimming, boating, fishing, or skiing need to be aware of the difference. Reflective rays are just as damaging as direct ones, and can cut your sun time almost in half.

UVA rays are the weakest of the three, which is a good thing, because they make up over 90 percent of the sun's radiation that reaches us on Earth. "Weakest" does not mean "powerless," however. UVA rays are responsible for much of the photo-aging that happens to people who spend a lot of time outdoors. Regular and repeated exposure can produce dermal distress, from fine lines and wrinkles, irregular skin pigmentation, and excessive dryness to lowered skin immunity and pre-cancerous and skin cancer lesions. UVA rays are hard to stop, too. They slip right through glass and many barriers, including most clothes.

Besides penetrating our superficial epidermis, UVA rays dip down lower into the dermis. Together with UVB, UVA rays can destroy skin through several pathways: inflammation kills cells directly; though blood vessels dilate in response to the heat, they become congested

with cellular debris and so reduce circulation to affected areas; and they destroy nutrients. The result is that collagen and connective tissue become compromised, producing the dull, dry, and thickened leathery skin appearance. The greater danger, of course, is skin cancer.

CATCHING THOSE RAYS BEFORE THEY CATCH YOU

Even brief, reoccurring exposure to the sun's rays can initiate dermal damage. This includes the walk to the mailbox, the chat with a neighbor, and the walk in and out from your car to the store. The prevention needed is provided best by clothing—long sleeves and wide-brimmed hats—plus sunblock.

Clothing provides a dependable physical block that doesn't wash or wear off all day. Over the last decade or so, researchers have been developing clothing designed specifically to keep UV rays away from the skin. One brand that even has a protection rating is Coolibar (www.coolibar.com; 800-926-6509). Their catalog has a range of styles for men, women, and children. For fullest protection, a hat should have at least a three-inch brim all the way around so it shades your nose, neck, and ears (baseball and golf caps don't do the job).

Sunscreens absorb rays and diffuse them, while sunblocks do just what their name implies: they deflect the rays away from your skin. Sunscreens present a few broad problems. First, many of them contain potentially dangerous chemicals that can be absorbed and react with the skin. Second, some recent research involving mice suggests that one particular ingredient, titanium oxide, may cause damage to brain cells.

Lastly, and more relevant here, is that most conventional sunscreens do not provide protection across enough of the spectrum. They can protect against some UVB and UVA II, but provide little or no protection against UVA I. Even some brands that claim to offer UVA/UVB

protection take care of perhaps only 30 percent of UVA. And sunscreens targeted to filter out only UVB appear to have no effect on the incidence of melanoma.

SPF (skin protection factor) classification is based on the UVB protection offered. The higher the SPF number is, the more UVB rays that are blocked, and therefore the longer you can stay exposed to the sun without burning. The FDA classifies sunscreens as products that provide SPF between 2 and 14, where sunblocks have an SPF of 15 and higher.

What is not commonly understood is that you cannot extend your sun protection by reapplying the same SPF number. SPF protection is not cumulative, and two applications of SPF 4 do not give the same protection as one application of SPF 8. Choose a product that will protect you for the total amount of time you'll be exposed, and reapply it as necessary. Then go out and enjoy yourself.

Because of the problems associated with sunscreens, I recommend that you use a sunblock that contains a micronized preparation of zinc oxide, which blocks UVA. This physical sunblock is not absorbed, but stays on the skin to reflect the damaging rays away. You may remember the bad old days of lifeguards with zinc-white noses and lips, but newer preparations are almost colorless and go on easier with even better protection. Two brands I like are Epicuren (www.epicuren.com) and SkinCeuticals (www.skinceuticals.com; 800-811-1660). Contact the companies directly to locate a retailer near you.

★ ★ ★

Although we all face the inevitability of death, we have some control over how our lives evolve and how they come to a close. Cancer

is not a given. By following the recommendations in this report you can help protect yourself and your loved ones from this terrible disease. Remember, if you have been diagnosed with cancer take a good look at your options—conventional and natural. Being informed and in charge automatically puts you at better odds. It's the best way to help ensure you have the life that you deserve.

To Your Good Health,



Dr. Marcus Laux

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bring on debilitating side effects such as impotence and incontinence. The saddest part of the story is that these men, and too many others like them, have more than likely undergone such treatments needlessly. Good intentions, incomplete and presumptuous science, and zealous treatment have left too many men hindered rather than helped. It's true that medical science is constantly changing. Doctors and scientists think they know the best protocol for a certain condition until the next piece of research reveals another layer of understanding. Knowledge is a moving target. Here's what we know about prostate cancer right now:

Nearly every man will develop prostate cancer if he lives long enough. It has been found in 8 percent of men in their 20s (this data comes from healthy males who died of trauma), and in 80 percent of men in their 70s. For most men, the cancer is slow growing, is not invasive, and does not become a clinical concern. This means that very few men die of prostate cancer; most die *with* it, never aware they had it. There is a variety of prostate cancer that grows quickly, though, so it's worth knowing what is going on in your body.

Understanding the Prostate Tests

There are several tests to consider for monitoring your prostate health.

PROSTATE SPECIFIC ANTIGEN TEST

Prostate specific antigen, or PSA, is an enzyme produced by the prostate. It is found in high concentrations in semen, where it liquefies the fluids after ejaculation so sperm can move more freely. Some PSA is normally found in the blood, too, but levels can rise in the presence of prostate problems, such as infection, BPH, urinary retention, biopsy, or cancer. It's important to keep in mind that an increase does not mean cancer is present, nor does a low level guarantee an absence of cancer. There are a number of confounding factors involved. For men over 50, ejaculation within two days of testing, for

instance, may give artificially raised results. For this and other reasons, the PSA test can yield falsely positive results.

In the fall of 2004, the PSA test was exposed as a faulty cancer screening tool by one of its earliest pioneers—Dr. Thomas Stamey, the founding chairman of the Stanford urology department. When Dr. Stamey led his investigations in the early 1980s, PSA was considered a good candidate for detecting prostate cancer, as its blood level appeared to correlate well with the presence of active disease. But in recent years, the figures show its predictive value is really only about 2 percent, or worthless. Why the difference? The early research tested well-established, advanced prostate cancer cases, but when PSA was used widely as a screen for all men with generally smaller tumors, it flunked badly. What was thought to be a meaningful measure to determine cancer progression and a reason for the prostate to be removed is actually only a measure of prostate size. What is not known at this time is whether prostate screening even saves lives. Studies are underway and hopefully we'll have more answers soon.

The take home for you and your doctor is that an elevated PSA test result does not necessarily indicate prostate cancer and, by itself, is not a compelling reason to remove the prostate gland. Do we throw out the PSA test altogether? No, because it can still provide plenty of information. If you have a baseline test at age 40, then another at age 45, then yearly tests after age 50, a change in your serum PSA level is something to be investigated. PSA is also a useful way to track the effectiveness of treatment for prostate cancer. Finally, it is a good predictor of outcome once a cancer is detected.

According to conventional medical standards, normal blood PSA levels range from 0–4 ng/mL, and:

- Anything from 4–10 ng/mL is considered slightly elevated with a 20–30 percent risk for cancer

- ▶ 10–20 ng/mL is considered moderately elevated with a 50–75 percent risk
- ▶ Anything above 20 ng/mL is considered highly elevated, correlating with a 90 percent risk.

Because PSA tends to rise with age, I feel an age-adjusted guideline better discriminates between a healthy and a problematic prostate. Here are my more realistic guidelines for normal PSA levels:

- ▶ Age 40–49 0.0–2.5 ng/mL
- ▶ Age 50–59 0.0–3.5 ng/mL
- ▶ Age 60–69 0.0–4.5 ng/mL
- ▶ Age 70–79 0.0–6.5 ng/mL

(Note that 4.0 is no longer considered the cut-off point for normal after age 60.)

DIGITAL RECTAL EXAM

Another examination that can provide further information about the health of your prostate is the digital rectal exam (DRE). Any cancer that can be felt is significant, and is likely a reason for treatment. But don't be lulled into a false sense of security; cancers can grow in prostate regions that cannot be felt directly.

WHAT TO DO WITH TEST RESULTS

If your test results indicate that you're facing prostate problems, such as BPH, my primary advice would be to avoid reflexively hopping on the Proscar® bandwagon. Proscar (finasteride) was introduced in the early 1990s and was the first drug designed to treat an enlarged prostate. This drug is widely prescribed, but is not universally successful. It's also costly, and recent evidence suggests it could be very dangerous with continued use—for as short as one year. While finasteride has been shown to prevent approximately 25 percent of prostate cancers, these look to be the insignificant types, the kind men die with, not from. If a man taking finasteride develops prostate cancer, however, his cancer is more likely to be a very aggressive form of the disease. (*NEJM* 2003;349:215-224) The drug also artificially

decreases PSA, making prostate cancer harder to detect. Fortunately, there are other, natural alternatives to consider.

Diet and Lifestyle Are Paramount

While there is little agreement among health disciplines as to the cause of and cure for prostate problems, it's generally agreed that lifestyle and diet are of utmost importance for prostate health.

THE LIFESTYLE LINK

The lifestyle link to prostate health is never as clear as when you consider prostate cancer. All types of cancer can go through three phases: initiation (the first damage to a cell's DNA), promotion (the formation of microscopic benign growths), and progression (conversion from benign to malignant). Perhaps up to half the men in all ethnicities show prostate cancer cell initiation by their 20s, but it is not dangerous or deadly. Prostate cancer only becomes relevant in the promotion and progression phases.

There are large differences in the rate of advanced prostate cancer between various cultures, and this might lead you to suspect that genetic factors are involved (and they may be to some degree). However, epidemiologic studies have found correlations between prostate cancer and environment. These studies were motivated by the observation that prostate cancer rates change in groups of people that migrate to other countries (such as from Asia to America).

Historically, in Asia, the initiation phase seldom advanced into the promotion phase. The initial cells just seemed to be neutralized in Asian men. The cancer stayed small, local, and benign, and rarely became a problem. However, as American foods and lifestyles have entered into the Asian culture, there has also been a rise in the incidence of advanced prostate cancer with corresponding complications. Similarly, if an Asian male who previously led a traditional lifestyle with a traditional diet moves to the

United States, he suddenly increases his risk of advanced prostate cancer development if he also changes his lifestyle and diet with his relocation.

Prostate cancer becomes a grave health issue only when it advances to the progression stage or it spreads to other sites in the body. The initiation of this disease appears to be globally ubiquitous, but cultural and environmental influences seem to be what makes it advance to the promotion and progression stages.

DIET DO'S

One of your first courses of action for protecting and enhancing your prostate health should be to clean up your diet. I believe that a diet full of sugars, carbohydrates, and saturated and trans fats, with few antioxidants and plant-based nutrients, is central to the cascade of events leading to BPH and worse. Your diet is your foundation, and it matters more than most drugs or supplements.

The Fat Factor

If there's one macro-nutrient category to focus on as the factor that causes the advancement from initiation to promotion, it has to be the type of fat we eat. Traditional Asian diets have a great deal of EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) from wild fish, while American diets tend to get a great deal of arachidonic acid from meat and dairy cattle that are raised on commercial feed. There is a definite correlation between prostate cancer mortality and arachidonic acid intake. Let me explain why.

Arachidonic acid and EPA compete for the same enzymes in the 5-LOX pathway. The first of these fatty acids to enter the pathway dictates the metabolites that come out the other side—with either detrimental or beneficial consequences.

It turns out that one of the breakdown products of arachidonic acid is an extremely powerful prostate cancer agent called 5-HETE, which causes prostate cancer to spread. However, the cells in all prostate cancer lines start to die off

quickly once 5-HETE is removed from their environment. So, when you change your diet from one high in arachidonic acid to one higher in more healthy EPA/DHA foods, you curtail the 5-HETE production and help out your prostate.

Nature provides many safe and effective 5-LOX inhibitors that partially prevent arachidonic acid from being turned into 5-HETE—these include green tea, olive oil, saw palmetto, *Boswellia serrata*, turmeric, and especially ginger. Adding good foods, herbs, and spices to your diet helps protect and enhance your prostate health.

Also, you need to balance your meat, dairy, prepared foods, omega-6 fatty acids, and trans fats with omega-3s from fish and flax, omega-9s such as the oleic acid found in olives, medium-chain fatty acids such as those in coconut oil, and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) from ruminant meat and milk.

Animal research shows that CLA can significantly inhibit tumor growth, but natural levels in food can be found only in milk and meat from grass-fed ruminant animals such as goats, sheep, and cattle. Animals that are raised on commercial livestock feed produce less of this fatty acid—giving us all the detriments of arachidonic acid with none of the benefits of CLA. Most health food stores carry CLA, and you can order it online through www.tonalin.com.

THE BEST FOODS FOR YOUR PROSTATE

Here is a list of specific food items that I highly recommend for promoting good prostate health:

Brazil nuts. Selenium is one of the best supplemental nutrients for prostate health because it activates a primary immune defense antioxidant enzyme called glutathione peroxidase. The best source is Brazil nuts, and you should crack and peel your own to get the greatest antioxidant benefits. Other sources of this important nutrient include: tuna, shellfish, whole grains, and sunflower seeds.

Allium vegetables. Allium foods such as garlic, onions, leeks, chives, scallions, and shallots are rich in flavonols and organosulfur compounds, both of which are known to promote healthy cell growth. Garlic and scallions seem to provide the best cell protection.

Tomatoes. For quite a while now, tomatoes have been touted as being a top cancer-fighting food. A study published in 2002 showed that men who ate two or more servings of tomato sauce a week were 23 percent less at risk for prostate cancer than those who ate one serving or less per month. And it appears that whole tomato products are more effective than supplements of lycopene, thought to be the main cancer-fighting component. Nature's synergy is alive and well!

Avocados. Avocados are a rich source of monounsaturated oleic acid and provide one of the richest sources of beta-sitosterol—a proven prostate protector. It's recently come to light that the healthy fats in avocados increase the absorption of carotenoids and phytonutrients, acting as a natural nutrient booster.

New research from Ohio State University shows that men and women who consumed a salad of lettuce, carrots, spinach, and approximately 2.5 tablespoons of avocado absorbed more than thirteen times the beta-carotene, eight times the alpha-carotene, and four times the lutein than those who ate the same salad without avocado. Similarly, those who ate salsa with avocado absorbed more than four times the lycopene and doubled their beta-carotene absorption than those who ate the same salsa without avocado. These findings are important because men with the highest levels of carotenoids in their blood have been shown to have a lower risk of prostate cancer.

Finally, avocados are a rich source of the antioxidant vitamin E. A recent study showed that men with the highest blood levels of two forms of vitamin E—alpha tocopherol and gamma tocopherol—greatly reduced their risk of prostate cancer.

So, the next time you're feasting on guacamole and salsa, thank yourself for being so good to your prostate. I also recommend eating more fish, olives, coconuts, and macadamia nuts, plus grass-fed beef and organic dairy products (for the natural and beneficial CLA). You should also adopt cooking methods that don't use oil—baking, steaming, poaching, and roasting. Eat wisely; it's the best medicine there is.

Mother Nature's Gifts to Men

In addition to a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet, there are several natural supplement therapies you should consider for prostate health. These are well-studied, thoroughly documented nutrients, which are used widely throughout the world. In fact, in Germany and Austria, over 90 percent of men and their physicians choose natural therapies over synthetics to treat prostate problems, and in Italy natural medicine is used five times as often as synthetic drugs.

THE TOP TWO

Saw palmetto. Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) is the most successful and well-researched medicinal plant for BPH. It has been the subject of dozens of clinical trials, almost all conducted in Europe. It works by inhibiting the action of the 5-alpha reductase enzyme, which has been linked to prostate growth. Be sure to use a saw palmetto berry extract that is standardized to 85–95 percent fatty acids and sterols. This is the most thoroughly investigated form and the one shown to significantly improve urine flow, decrease residual urine by 50 percent, and lower the frequency of nocturia.

Beta-sitosterol. Along with saw palmetto, I would take another long-time European favorite, beta-sitosterol. Beta-sitosterol is one of several plant sterols, or fats. Although similar in structure to cholesterol, plant sterols have none of cholesterol's unfavorable aspects and many beneficial ones. For instance, it helps reduce inflammation and boost the immune system. Beta-sitosterol is

a constituent of the top herbs for prostate health, including saw palmetto.

The most popular beta-sitosterol product in Germany is Harzol®, which contains 30 mg of the substance. Another European product is Azuprostat® with 120 mg per dose. Unfortunately, both are expensive and difficult to get in the US. Your best bet is to take a quality beta-sitosterol supplement two to three times per day. Of those available here, I recommend Beta Prostate by NAC Vitamins (800-943-6465 or www.newvitality.com).

Note: If you conduct an Internet search, you'll find a number of articles that claim beta-sitosterol is the sole active ingredient in saw palmetto and will suggest that you only take beta-sitosterol. I have looked at the research in depth, and have not found complete support for this notion. Beta-sitosterol appears to have real prostate benefits, but there is a lack of agreement about what form and dose is needed to be effective. By contrast, saw palmetto has proved itself over and over again in controlled studies. To be safe, you'll want to take both.

IN ADDITION...

If you're eager to do all that you can for your prostate, the following adjunct therapies show promise. I wouldn't take any of these in place of saw palmetto and beta-sitosterol, but in addition to them.

Nettle root and pumpkin seed oil. Combinations with nettle root and/or pumpkin seed oil have shown promise, and these two herbs are approved by the German Commission E for the treatment of BPH. The roots of the stinging nettle contain a mixture of various water-soluble compounds, including lectins, phenols, sterols, and lignans. It is the extract oil of pumpkin that has been approved, not pumpkin seeds. I like Nettle and Pygeum with Pumpkin from Enzymatic Therapy (800-783-2286 or www.enzy.com).

Pygeum africanum. The bark of the African prune tree (*P. africanum*) has long been used

to treat urinary tract infections. Its properties are anti-inflammatory, anti-edemic, decongesting, and prolactin inhibiting. It appears to have positive effects on the bladder in animals, yet definitive human studies are lacking. One of its important constituents is beta-sitosterol. Try standardized pygeum extract from Nature's Way (801-489-1500 or www.naturesway.com).

Flower pollen. In Europe, flower pollen has a long history of use for urinary and prostate problems. The precise action of flower pollen is still unknown. Experimental studies seem to indicate that it has both anti-inflammatory and anti-androgenic properties. (The latter refers to its ability to counteract some of the actions of testosterone.) The product used in the research was a Swedish pollen preparation called Cernilton. I also like Prostanex™, a saw palmetto and flower pollen product. You can purchase these supplements through Graminex (877-472-6469 or www.graminex.com).

Zinc. This mineral is found in greater concentrations in the prostate than anywhere else in the body, so logic would suggest that zinc helps the prostate. Plus, zinc has considerable health value in general. I'd say take it regularly in your multivitamin.

With all of these natural therapies, expect results over two to three months. And plan to stay on these long-term as a preventive therapy. The bottom-line message here is that taking the right herbal products can deliver real results and relief of BPH symptoms—without side effects.

Exercise and Sex Can Help, Too!

Exercise is important to prostate health, as it improves blood flow and nutrient supply to the gland. And if your exercise regimen helps you to lose a little weight, so much the better. If you have a large belly, there is considerable extra weight sitting right on top of your prostate gland. The gland gets compressed and literally bent out of shape. Exercise also helps deplete stress hormones, balance sex hormones, and

speed toxin removal. Move your body, and your prostate will thank you.

Regular sex also appears to play a protective role for your prostate. Sex can exercise and tone the prostate, and improve circulation and alter hormone levels. Regular and loving sexual bonding brings the added benefits of physical contact and intimacy, which can never be underestimated.

★ ★ ★

Using the information in this report, you can effectively monitor your prostate health and use

proven, natural solutions to ensure it continues to function optimally. Remember, although prostate problems are extremely common, there are simple measures you can take to protect yourself from them.

To Your Good Health,



Dr. Marcus Laux

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Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

The "Instant Cure" for High Blood Pressure

IN THIS SPECIAL REPORT

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Most modern diseases and conditions have one thing in common—they are predominantly an indictment of our diet and lifestyle. High blood pressure, or hypertension (HT), is certainly no

exception to that rule. It affects more than one in four Americans, and two-thirds of those over age 65—more than 50 million people in the US alone.

HT is extremely dangerous—literally a ticking and unpredictable time bomb. It is known as an insidious "silent killer" because there are often no symptoms until severe organ damage, frank neuro-degeneration, or sudden death occurs. You may notice nothing while your body is taking exception to its ill effects. In addition, HT can:

- ▶ Triple your risk of dying from a heart attack (blood pressure literally predicts death or survival)
- ▶ Increase your risk of suffering a stroke by seven fold
- ▶ Cause your arteries to become hardened and scarred and lose their elasticity
- ▶ Make your heart work unnecessarily harder
- ▶ Contribute significantly to heart, kidney, and eye disease, including atherosclerosis, aneurysm, stroke, and blindness
- ▶ Mimic other conditions and lead to misdiagnosis, improper treatment, and possibly death.

Pretty amazing for something that isn't even a disease, but a symptom of our body's dysfunction. The great news is that most people with HT have a mild to moderate form, and simple changes in diet and lifestyle can save lives safely and gently. In this report, I will show you how you can incorporate such changes into your life and tell you about my favorite natural cure for high blood pressure.

Don't Take the Pressure

Blood pressure is the force exerted against your arterial walls as blood is being pumped through your circulatory system. The walls expand as the contracting heart pushes blood between them, and then return to their normal state. When you get your blood pressure taken, the top number shows your systolic pressure—the pressure experienced when arterial walls are stretched. The bottom, or diastolic, number shows the pressure between heart beats. The top number is always larger.

Normal systolic pressure is now defined as below 120 and diastolic pressure as below 80 mm Hg. Slightly higher pressures, from readings over 120/80 up to 139/89, are now being called "prehypertension." The name highlights the fact that arterial damage starts earlier than previously thought. Yes, even prehypertensive blood pressures should be taken seriously because your health risk rises as your blood pressure elevates. Stage 1 (of 2) HT indicates blood pressure of 140–159/90–99. Over 80 percent of cases fall into these two stages.

Get to the Heart of the Matter

It may sound easier to maintain your old habits and take drugs to lower your blood pressure. But the drugs your doctor will prescribe are likely to only treat your symptoms by decreasing your heart's functioning, making you urinate water or some other clever trick. So, in the end, they haven't corrected your problem. Stop taking them and your HT comes right back, and often it's worse than it was before.

Drugs simply control the numbers, and not very reliably at that—roughly one out of three people on them still have high blood pressure. Worse still, since drugs don't correct the cause, they can't eliminate all your disease risks. That's the old, "remove the batteries from the smoke detector, but don't put out the fire" approach. So while those with high-risk HT may

need symptomatic care as they improve their lifestyle, most people do not.

Lower the Pressure Naturally

Unlike with conventional drugs, the risk of adverse reactions from natural medicine and lifestyle changes is rare, and the living benefits are real, measurable, and lasting. In fact, after you start to follow the suggestions I am about to share with you, you'll be amazed at how great you can feel.

HOLISTROL: A NEW, NATURAL BLOOD PRESSURE SOLUTION

One of the most effective natural products for blood pressure I've found has only been available in the US for a short time. It's called Holistrol®, and it's based on an ancient Tibetan formula that has been updated using modern technology. The original formula needed to be taken in amounts so large that most people today would not be willing to stay on it very long. Rulin Xiu, PhD, devised a way to reformulate it to maintain the potency but reduce the pill size.

Research on Holistrol's blood pressure-lowering effects was highlighted at the 2003 Inter-American Society for Hypertension conference, sponsored by the American Heart Association. The double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized study involved 19 people with blood pressure readings between 140–159 mm Hg systolic and 90–99 mm Hg diastolic. In most, blood pressure dropped within normal ranges in just four weeks. The average decrease in systolic pressure was 14.2 mm Hg, while the average decrease in diastolic was 9.9 mm Hg. The study lasted for eight weeks.

There's more good news from this small study: Several of the participants reported being in a better mood, and others felt they had more energy. Now, those are the kind of side effects we all want!

In addition, after the Holistrol was stopped at the eight-week mark, the blood pressures that improved stayed in the healthy ranges for a month or more. There have also been significant positive study outcomes for this supplement in China.

All of these findings suggest that this traditional herbal blend is working at a deeper level in the body, meaning it is doing more than just managing the numbers.

The individual ingredients in Holistrol—holly leaf, hawthorn berry, and daikon radish—have been used traditionally for centuries. They are safe, time-tested, nontoxic ingredients, all of which have been successful separately in improving circulation and lowering blood pressure. Interestingly, however, the proprietary combination in Holistrol is more effective than taking all

three of these as separate supplements. In other words, Holistrol is more than the sum of its parts.

Holly leaf, an herb that acts on the central nervous system, is what Dr. Xiu calls the formula's "secret weapon." It's responsible for the mood-modulating effects that some of the study participants noticed. Although holly is not used widely in the US, it's well accepted and used in Asia.

Hawthorn is one of my favorite herbs because it's so healing for the heart. It works in several ways, strengthening arteries, improving heart function, and supporting circulation. Plus, any time you improve circulation, you enhance energy. Hawthorn has also been reported to help lower cholesterol, improve immunity, and enhance the complexion, and it's thought to have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties. When I take hawthorn berry by itself, I use a solid extract and eat it off the spoon because the flavor is so delightful. You may even recall eating hawthorn jam when you were growing up.

Daikon radish is a member of the cruciferous family, and has long enjoyed a place in Chinese medicine. It has been shown to support a healthy heart, and lower blood pressure in both animal and human studies.

Several Chinese human studies with larger populations have shown very favorable response rates to this traditional herbal formula with a high margin of safety, and no toxicity. I believe that, over time, Holistrol will become the premier choice for safe, effective blood pressure lowering. It's safe to take with blood pressure drugs and may even allow you to wean off of them over time, but don't try to do this alone; work with your doctor.

Holistrol is available in the US through Pharm East, the company that formulated and manufactures it. You can order Holistrol by calling 888-275-3570 or by visiting www.holistrol.com. For lasting results, use Holistrol while making the other fundamental lifestyle changes I share with you in this report.

USING DIET TO REDUCE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

There is no single aspect of our modern diet that causes HT, but rather many intermingled imbalances and deficiencies that create a pressure regulatory system problem that needs readjusting for a long and happy life. Correcting your living balance sheet can improve your blood pressure rapidly and reliably.

North American diets tend to provide 10 times more sodium than needed. High sodium chloride diets with low potassium intake have been well researched in HT. They can cause increased fluid volume and impair the blood pressure regulating process. Vegetarians tend to have less overall cardiovascular disease and lower blood pressure. That

Other Supplements for Hypertension

In addition to Holistrol, I recommend that you take some other nutritional supplements that will help you maintain healthy blood pressure. Check your multi for the nutrients listed below, and augment your supplement regimen as needed.

- **Essential Fatty Acids (EFA)** (two to four tsp. or two to three capsules two to three times daily with food). EFAs are essential for helping to maintain normal blood pressure. They help balance E-series prostaglandins, which help regulate blood pressure. I like Eskimo-3 by Enzymatic Therapy, which is available in health food stores.
- **Magnesium** (500–1,000 mg daily with food). Used for HT since 1925, magnesium levels are inversely proportional to blood pressure numbers. People with high blood pressure have less magnesium in their cells than those with normal blood pressure. Magnesium can cause diarrhea, so start low and build your dose up slowly.
- **Calcium** (1,000 mg elemental calcium daily with food—but not with the magnesium). People with HT often have a lower calcium intake than people with normal blood pressure, and several studies have shown calcium supplements help lower blood pressure.
- **CoQ10** (100 mg two to three times daily with food). Clinical research has shown CoQ10's ability to significantly lower blood pressure and provide cardiovascular, brain, and energy benefits.
- **Vitamin C** (one to three grams daily with food). Men with HT have lower levels of vitamin C than men with normal blood pressure. Similar to magnesium, levels of vitamin C are inversely proportional to blood pressure. There is evidence that vitamin C helps arteries maintain their youthful flexibility for a lifetime.
- **Garlic** (320 mg once daily, up to 960 mg in divided doses with food). Garlic supplements have been shown to lower blood pressure. Use a high-quality standardized garlic product. Garlinase 4000® by Enzymatic Therapy (www.enzy.com) and Garlicin® by Nature's Way (www.naturesway.com) are good products.
- If you've tested high for toxic metals, consider using **Chlorella and Porphyrin-Zyme™** from Biotics Research (sold through health care professionals only) long-term to rid your body of these pollutants. Chlorella can be purchased from Sun Chlorella (800-829-2828, ext. 55; www.sunchlorellausa.com). For contact and other info on Biotics Research, visit www.bioticsresearch.com.

***Note:** If you're taking blood thinners or other medications, consult your pharmacist and/or doctor regarding interactions. Do not stop any medication until you have a plan with your doctor.*

is not to say you need to become a vegetarian, but a healthy vegetarian diet contains higher amounts of certain nutrients—such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, essential fatty acids, fiber, and vitamins C and A—that may support normal blood pressure.

In addition, lower levels of simple versus complex carbohydrates, lower total fats and cholesterol, and higher dietary fiber all have been shown to correlate with healthier blood pressure.

Interestingly, the vegetarian diet and the omnivore diet have comparable sodium intake, but when low potassium also exists, that can be one contributing factor too many. Higher amounts of potassium combined with reduced sodium intake can reduce the rise in blood pressure. If you're making good food choices and eating less packaged food, striking this balance becomes a cinch.

High levels of potassium are found in most all vegetables and fruits, especially green leafy vegetables, bananas, soy products, millet, legumes, potatoes with skin, cantaloupe, oranges, and pineapple, plus turkey, halibut, and salmon. When you eat foods with a favorable potassium/sodium ratio, excess sodium

is naturally excreted by your kidneys, with water following (which eases the swelling of edema), and your body functioning is improved.

Eating naturally sweet potassium-rich foods can reduce the strong sugar or alcohol cravings caused by heavy salt consumption and further reduce salt cravings. These foods include Sucanat™ (granulated cane juice), rice syrup, amazake, figs, yams, raisins, and fruit juice concentrate.

In general, when it comes to eating for healthy blood pressure, this is what I recommend:

- Limit refined foods, and focus on whole organic foods. This helps lower intake of all kinds of added sugars, trans fatty acids, and other saturated fats, and raises your intake of fiber and valuable nutrients. Eat a low-sugar diet, with sweets coming from natural fruits, nuts, and grains. Diets with 40 grams of fiber a day have been shown to prevent many forms of cardiovascular disease.
- If your diet is heavy in animal products, reduce their dominance. Meat has a place as a component of a healthy diet—when it's organic and in

amounts appropriate for you—along with plenty of plant-based foods.

- Minimize your intake of caffeinated foods and beverages. Long-term consumption of caffeine could have a direct effect on elevated blood pressure and may negatively affect your adrenal glands as well.
- Mild to moderate drinking may have cardiovascular benefits for some, but others need to limit alcoholic drinks to one to two a week or stop completely. Long-term alcohol consumption can induce HT in susceptible people due to increased norepinephrine and epinephrine secretion.
- Limit your intake of refined salt, whether your blood pressure is high or not. If your food is fresh, organic, and/or well prepared, there isn't much need for over-salting, because nature has already provided so many amazing and tantalizing flavors. For a different taste, remember to use herbs and spices.
- If you need a pre-planned diet, try DASH (Dietary Approach to Stopping Hypertension). You could experience a blood pressure drop in just two weeks, with plenty of food. *The DASH Diet for Hypertension* is available in bookstores and at Amazon.com, or you can find diet details and recipes at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash.

LIFESTYLE FOR AN HT-FREE LIFE

Hypertension (HT) exists almost exclusively in modernized, developed countries, where technotreated, refined “food,” prescription drugs, and a sedentary lifestyle are too often part of the package.

Genetics also play a role, but it's noteworthy that in remote Africa there is almost no HT, yet African-Americans have almost double the rate experienced by Caucasian-Americans. In short, genetics provides a predisposition, but diet and lifestyle tip the balance.

HT is here and on the rise in the US, especially in women, but it can be successfully defeated. To be clear, almost all cases of HT can be prevented and treated with diet, lifestyle, and supplement changes. These cure the underlying process for most people, so their blood pressure numbers naturally fall and stay within healthy ranges. And though making a lifestyle change can be difficult to start, it's a snap to maintain once those changes become routine.

Here are some lifestyle changes that will improve not only your blood pressure, but your overall health as well:

- **Stop smoking.** Smoking and environmental exposure to smoke may cause excess cadmium, lead,

or other toxic elements to build up in your body, and they can contribute to HT and other problems. The best test of your body's burden is the Hair Elemental Profile by Doctor's Data laboratories (800-323-2784).

- **Exercise.** Activity lowers stress hormones, releases body tension, and reduces sodium levels through sweat. It also helps reduce and maintain weight—even a few extra pounds can have a profound effect on blood pressure.

Exercising regularly is more important than what you actually do. Aerobics can work wonders fairly quickly, but you can try yoga, dancing, T'ai Chi, bicycling, walking, or whatever feels good to you. Don't overdo it; start slow and easy for the first two to four weeks.

- **Hydrotherapy.** Take a hot shower until you're heated through and almost limp, then quickly change the temperature to as cool as you can stand. After 45–60 seconds, return it to hot for one minute, then back to briskly cool for 45–60 seconds. Repeat again, if desired.

Always start with hot and end with cool. Dry with vigorous friction to tone and tune up your circulatory, nervous, and hormonal systems, and to release stress hormones and body tension. You'll feel new all over, with a clearer mind, calmer spirit, and more energy.

- **Meditation, therapy, and biofeedback.** Research findings show that people with long-term feelings of real hopelessness are three times more likely to develop HT. Remember, it's not only what you eat, but what's eating you that affects your health.

Biofeedback gives quick, clear signals in real time to help you determine whether your thoughts or actions are relaxing or stressful, and where you need to improve your mind/body communication. Consider trying RESPeRATE®, a medical device for lowering blood pressure through breathing exercises. RESPeRATE is available from InterCure (877-988-9388; www.resperate.com).

★ ★ ★

So, to recap, if you want to successfully lower your blood pressure naturally and safely, take steps now to implement the recommendations I have shared with you in this report. And, most important, remember that each change you make—dietary, lifestyle, etc.—is a key piece of a “bigger picture.” If you keep the picture in focus, you will reach your goal and maintain it for years to come.

Dr. Marcus Laux's

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The Astonishing One-Pill Energy Cure

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Poor diet and lack of proper supplementation are notorious energy drainers, but inner strain, conflict, and stress are stealth vitality enemies. Even perceived stress can affect your body posture or breathing habits, causing a release of stress hormones that deplete your energy, weaken your immune

and fatigued—bringing about a real potential for both physical and emotional breakdowns that usually result in increased vulnerability to disease.

During a stressful time, the autonomic nervous system responds rapidly to the problem. If left unchecked, stress causes the sympathetic branch that controls physiological responses (fight or flight) to become dominant over the parasympathetic branch that controls psychological and emotional reactions (relaxing and releasing). The body responds to stress by pumping out excitatory hormones like epinephrine (adrenaline), norepinephrine, and cortisol. When you have excessive levels of norepinephrine, you have an increased risk of hypertension, arteriosclerosis, cancer, heart attack, and flat-out fatigue. When you feel out of control, the hormone cortisol increases and compromises your immune system, making you more susceptible to infections and exhaustion. In fact, stress can increase cortisol levels from a normal output of 2 mg/day to as much as 300 mg/day. Such high cortisol levels have also been associated with depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders. In essence, stress exhausts every fiber of your body...and worse.

system, and compromise your overall health. In this special report, I'll tell you about one remarkable Indian herb that has proven to be an effective stress reducer and energy enhancer. Finally, you'll learn some simple steps you can take to round out your plan for eliminating chronic stress and boosting your energy.

The Mechanics of Stress

There actually are some benefits to ordinary stress. It's necessary for growth, change, and survival. But, while we can thrive on ordinary stress for short periods (some of us longer than others), long-term stress that is not appropriately handled, channeled, and released can cause an unhealthy depletion of energy and nutrients. It can also unbalance the nervous system to the point where we become lethargic, anxious,

Break the Stress Cycle With an Adaptogen

One of the best ways to break the stress cycle is with an adaptogenic herb. An adaptogen is any plant preparation that acts in a nonspecific

Energy

way to enhance your body's ability to resist stress and change, bringing it back to a state of normalcy. The term "adaptogen" was coined in the 1940s by Soviet scientist Nikolai Lazarev. It is a combination of the Greek words *adapto* (to adjust) and *gen* (producing). In other words, an adaptogen produces the right adjustments in your body.

Adaptogens seem to mostly populate regions with extreme climates and conditions. They tend to grow in almost unimaginably hostile environments: intense solar radiation, rarified oxygen, relentless winds, powerful storms, extreme freezing cold, scarce rainfall, et cetera. The obvious commonality here is that these plants have figured out how to adapt and thrive in areas where few other plants can take seed, let alone flourish.

In these harsh environments, it is easy to see the truth of Darwin's theory of natural selection that has come down to most people in the phrase "survival of the fittest." The truth is that all species of life can only survive if they can adapt to their environments—which is the concept at the heart of Darwin's theory. The good news is that it appears these adaptable traits are transmissible to us when we consume these unique and diverse phyto-compounds.

ADAPTOGENS AND THE STRESS RESPONSE

Dr. Selye, one of the founding fathers of stress research, defined three stages of stress: alarm, resistance (adaptation), and exhaustion. When you use an adaptogen, it modifies the stress process. You still go through the alarm phase, but with a higher threshold, and you maintain better cellular functioning longer. You still have a resistant phase; in fact, you become more adaptive or resistant, weathering the storm more efficiently. And if you do become exhausted, an adaptogen helps you recover faster and better.

Adaptogens do not stop the stress response. Instead, they make it less likely that stress will trigger a response in you. This saves energy that you would have used in the alarm phase to be

Definition of Adaptogens

Adaptogens are medicinal herbs that come from plants that have endured for millions of years, despite harsh climates. They improve the body's ability to adapt to a broad range of conditions and stressors, including anxiety, aging, temperature fluctuations, and environmental toxins.

Adaptogens help to normalize, and therefore protect, a body's systems and functions. They also help boost recovery. Although they are powerful and provide a wide range of regulatory activity, adaptogens must be nontoxic and act only against actual challenges to the system.

used more wisely in the resistance phase. Your body can then react intelligently and help itself.

For ages, adaptogens have been advertised for one or another of their effects, such as anti-aging, antioxidant, anti-stress, or immune boosting, but in reality, they can do it all. If you are low on energy, the right adaptogen will help you return to your normal vim and vigor. If you are too uptight to relax, an adaptogen will stimulate your body's calming mechanism so you can get the rest you need. Adaptogens don't invigorate or sedate *per se*; instead, they support your body's regulation and functioning, so your body seeks its own healthy balance.

Ashwagandha: An Adaptogenic Energy Cure

Ashwagandha (aka winter cherry, and formerly called "Indian ginseng") is an ancient Indian herb that has remarkable stress-relieving properties as well as excellent protective effects on the nervous system. It also has the ability to seek and destroy the free radicals that have been implicated in aging.

In a recent human clinical trial, researchers studied the effects of a standardized extract of ashwagandha on the negative effects of stress, including elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol. The participants subjectively reported increased energy, reduced fatigue, better sleep, and an enhanced sense of well-being. *The participants showed several measurable improvements,*

Create Your Own Stress-Zapping Routines

In addition to using adaptogenic herbs, there are several methods you can use to control energy-robbing stress hormones.

- **Make time for yourself.** Each day set aside 15 to 20 minutes just for you—read something for leisure, write in a journal, gaze out the window, enjoy a cup of your favorite tea, or go for a walk in the park. Nourish, protect, and cherish yourself and your time.
- **Meditate.** Daily meditation allows you time to quiet your mind and get more fully in touch with things that might be bothering you. Often the answer to your state of fatigue can be buried in your head—a little nagging worry that is triggering stress hormones and wearing you down. A daily “time out” for inward focus may help ferret out worries before they become energy busters.
- **T'ai Chi and Qigong** are types of moving meditation that require becoming inwardly focused. When practiced properly, they can stretch, squeeze, and massage every organ in your body and accelerate inner peace and create energy.
- **Learn to breathe more deeply.** Nothing beats deep-belly breathing for increased energy. When you breathe with your chest and shoulders, your body gets the message that you're stressed, even if you're not! Practice the natural way to breathe—deep into your body through your nose, with your belly moving in and out.
- **Visualize harmony.** You can control which emotions dominate your thoughts. For example, even in the trappings of rush-hour traffic in steaming summer heat you can take your spirit to the more refreshing atmosphere of a quiet beach by simply visualizing a more serene environment.
- **Make peace with the ones you love.** Visit or call them, write a letter, sit down and talk—get any anger, fear, or negative emotion out of your system. Ask for forgiveness or do the forgiving (whichever is appropriate). It could save your life. A study from the Journal of the American Medical Association noted an increase in coronary events among women who experience severe stress in their marriages or live-in relationships. Resolve your personal stresses so that you can release the tired tension of your differences.
- **Get your priorities in order.** Decide what's most important to you and let go of the things that simply don't matter as much. The person in your passenger seat is probably more important to you than the guy who cuts you off on the highway. Don't let negative energy ruin your time together. The family you come home to probably touches your heart more than an angry boss who took his bad day out on you. Find a way to let go of your wounded pride before you arrive home. Know what's important and let go of the rest.

including a reduction of cortisol levels up to 26%, a decline in fasting blood sugar levels, and improved lipid profiles.

Other studies support ashwagandha's neuro-protective powers. In one animal study, for instance, an examination of animal brains showed that 85% of the brain cells observed in the animals exposed to chronic stress showed signs of degeneration. But when ashwagandha was administered to chronically stressed animals, the number of degenerating brain cells was reduced by 80%!

Furthermore, in validated models of anxiety and depression, ashwagandha has been demonstrated to be as effective as some tranquilizers and antidepressant drugs. Specifically, oral administration of ashwagandha for five days suggested anxiety-relieving effects similar to those achieved by the anti-anxiety drug lorazepam, and antidepressant effects similar to those of the prescription antidepressant drug imipramine.

Many forms of ashwagandha on the market today don't contain nearly enough of the active ingredient to be effective. I recommend a new

product by Life Extension called Optimized Ashwagandha Extract. The suggested dosage of one capsule, twice daily on an empty stomach, provides 250 mg of the ashwagandha extract, standardized to 8% withanolide glycoside conjugates (10 mg) and 32% oligosaccharides (40 mg). You can find this product in many health food stores or you can order it online from Betterlife.com (www.betterlife.com or 800-317-7150).

Build a Healthy Foundation for Energy

Although ashwagandha is an excellent tool for bringing your body back into balance and helping to restore its natural energy reserves, I want to make one thing abundantly clear. Lasting energy comes from a healthy, active, well-nourished body, and from leading a rewarding, fulfilling life. Essentially, you play a major role in creating your own health destiny. No matter your age, you have the power to wake up every morning and embrace the day with energy and enthusiasm. Your habits—the way you eat, move, and relate to yourself and others—help determine how long you will live, what level of health you'll enjoy, how good your life will be, and how much energy you'll have. If you don't have as much energy as you'd like, you can change that by understanding and improving your body's primary source of fuel—food.

REAL FUEL WITH ENERGY TO BURN ONLY COMES FROM REAL FOOD

Real food is engineered by nature to be the perfect fuel that drives every body function, from immune support to energy production. Yet in today's world of convenience, real foods may not play much of a role. Fake foods have become the culprits of disease and fatigue...leading to personal energy crises. The difference between fake foods and real foods can be compared to the difference between a paper fire and a wood-burning fire. Paper fires or fake foods ignite and burn in a flash; wood fires or real foods burn for hours, providing long-lasting warmth and energy.

Our bodies are exhausted by paper fires caused by a nutrient-poor diet loaded with high-sugar

A Solution to Unwanted Weight Gain

Fatigue isn't the only sign of poor nutrition. Many people who struggle with weight gain and yo-yo dieting are responding to the body's hunger for nutrients. If you eat a full meal of empty carbohydrates, sugars, and saturated fats without answering your body's need for nutrients, your body will store your last meal as fat, and then signal for more food—begging for more high-octane fuel. You'll feed it more of the same stuff, and it will still be essentially starved.

Unwanted weight gain is a vicious cycle that can be broken. Start eating more nutrient-dense, fiber-rich foods. Unlike refined foods, consuming whole foods makes it difficult to exceed your calorie limits. The nutrition, fiber, and bulk found in real food makes you feel full—and satisfied—long before your body gets too many calories. What's even better is that, for the most part, you can eat as much of these nourishing foods as you want without the same level of worry about weight gain.

snacks, trans fatty acids, preservatives, additives, convenience foods, dinners in a box (or bag), and frozen junk. There is no energy because there is no real food for fuel.

Perhaps the challenge lies in the perception of carbohydrates. Many people believe that carbohydrates give you energy. This is only half true. Complex carbohydrates are a primary source of fuel; but it is the balance of complex carbohydrates, fats, and high-quality protein that allows the body to create a steady flow of energy. Sadly, even on three heaping meals a day—plus snacks—many overfed Americans are stumbling around in a state of malnutrition because they are lacking in balanced, nutrient-dense nourishment.

Think of the body in terms of an automobile—a car wouldn't run on pond water or diet soda or coffee. A car will only run on the source of fuel that will rev its engine. If you give it poor fuel, the engine will ping, sputter and stall. The body isn't any different. It is designed to run on a combination of proteins, complex carbohydrates,

Energy From The Sea

Sea vegetables contain more vitamins and minerals, ounce for ounce, than any other food group, and specifically more calcium and magnesium than dairy. They are one of the only non-animal sources of vitamin B12. These plants restore energy by nourishing the nervous, immune, and hormonal systems. They boost metabolism, reactivate libido by supporting the adrenal glands, and cleanse the whole body. Their rich fiber content encourages the prompt elimination of toxins from the bowels, reducing the amount of time that these toxins are actually in the body.

Common Sea Vegetables

There are several varieties of sea vegetables. Here is a short list of the most common and easiest to find.

- **Nori** is often used in sushi and is easily digestible. It contains more vitamin C than oranges, and its levels of vitamin A and B are on par with spinach.
- **Dulse** is a red sea plant packed with essential vitamins, iron, and mineral-rich sea salt. It is a supremely balanced nutrient, with 300 times more iodine and 50 times more iron than wheat. Its salty, spicy flavor makes it a good introductory sea vegetable for beginners. Dulse can be eaten right out of the package, but should be examined first to eliminate any sand or small shells.
- **Kombu** is comprised of nearly half slow-release carbohydrates, making it useful for stabilizing blood sugars. Its healthy protein content makes it a good choice for vegetarians and those trying to lose weight. And its fiber content can help ease digestive disorders, including irritable bowel syndrome.
- **Wakame** is a type of kelp similar to kombu. It is rich in protein, calcium, iodine, magnesium, iron, and folate. Lignans, which may help fight certain cancers, are found in high quantity in wakame. The browner versions are more strongly flavored. It's used like a vegetable in soups, simmered dishes, and salads.
- **Hijiki** is a black seaweed that can be reconstituted in water and added to salads or soups.

Sea vegetables can be found in Asian food markets and in most health food stores. Even your local grocery may carry the more common varieties. Select products that have been wild-crafted from pure, pristine areas.

How To Use Sea Vegetables

Once you grow accustomed to their flavor and texture, sea vegetables are easy to use as condiments or to add to your favorite soups, casseroles, and stews. A favorite of mine is nori. I use toasted black and white sesame seeds with nori flakes on soups, salads, and vegetables. I also love sushi—particularly tuna and avocado rolls. Dulse, kombu, hijiki, and kelp are easy to toss into a green salad. The recipes below make a fabulous dip and a very healthy, tasty bowl of soup.

Nori Vegetable Dip

Combine the following ingredients and blend well. Serve with raw vegetables or whole wheat bread cubes.

- 2 Tbsp. roasted nori, crumbled
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 2 Tbsp. tamari powder or soy sauce
- 3 Tbsp. sesame seeds
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil or sesame oil

Sea Vegetable Soup

- 1 cup any sea vegetables
- 3 quarts spring water
- 3 tablespoons toasted sesame seed oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1½ cups broccoli, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 teaspoon marjoram
- Dash of cayenne pepper, fresh ground pepper, or ginger
- 2 tablespoons miso
- Fresh parsley, chopped

- Optional: mushrooms, potatoes, brown rice

Soak sea vegetables for 30 minutes. Discard water to remove excess sodium. Simmer sea vegetables in water. Sauté onion, carrot, broccoli and garlic for 5 minutes, till onions are translucent. Add to water with remaining ingredients except miso. Simmer for 30 minutes. Turn off heat. Remove one-half cup of liquid and dissolve miso in it. Return to soup and heat for 3 minutes. Do not boil. Adjust seasonings to taste. Garnish with parsley.

(Recipes [slightly modified] from *Fighting Radiation with Foods, Herbs, and Vitamins—Documented Natural Remedies That Boost Your Immunity and Detoxify* by Steven R. Schechter, N.D.)

and fats that together contain enzymes, vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients. It is this kind of diet that provides lasting energy and vital protection. Without this high-octane nutrition, your energy and life force will fade.

NATURE PROVIDES THE SOLUTION

For the majority of exhausted sufferers, the solution to constant fatigue is to eat the real, whole foods nature has given us.

- High-quality proteins with adequate healthy fats and balanced with complex carbohydrates should dominate your diet. Specifically, eat mostly organic meats, seafood, legumes, vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Also add roots, tubers, fermented foods, and eggs to your diet.
- Choose a wide variety of foods that are in season in your area.
- Cold-water, wild fish is an excellent source of omega-3 fats, which improve energy by boosting metabolism—not to mention their immune-enhancing, heart-protecting, hormone-harmonizing and anti-inflammatory actions.
- Avocados, nuts such as walnuts, seeds like pumpkin or flax, and olives are sources of fuel and energy-boosting essential fatty acids. If you are watching your waistline, don't dismiss these foods as bad. In fact, good oils will go a lot farther in satisfying your sense of hunger than a "diet" snack bar. But eat them in moderation.

Look for organic sources of meat, poultry, and dairy products. Beef is naturally lean and markedly healthier for you if it's grass-fed and hormone-free. A great way to ensure balanced meat and poultry intake is to make them only one part of your meal, rather than the mainstay. Put them in a casserole or marinate or sauté them with a bit of oil, water or broth, wine, garlic, or onions, as a side dish, along with a variety of colorful vegetables. You may want to eat more dark meat as well, since dark meat is more metabolically active and therefore contains more

energy-building mitochondria. Over time, dark meat is more likely to enhance energy levels than white meat.

An example of better eating is using a few shavings of fresh grated pecorino cheese on pasta, rather than topping it with loads of powdery Parmesan. Tastier, more strongly flavored cheese means you'll use less. And using an unrefined, preferably organic product can significantly reduce your exposure to the additives and preservatives that can weaken your body and rob you of energy.

Fortify Your Diet With Targeted Nutrients

Once you've embarked on a whole-foods diet, targeted nutritional supplements (in addition to ashwagandha!) can play a big role in maintaining your natural energy supply. By definition, supplements are supplementary to a healthy lifestyle and will offer support overall with energy to burn. Short-acting stimulants such as excessive caffeine and ephedrine give a kick but are not the long-term answer.

The recommendations I give in this report are in addition to a good quality daily multivitamin/mineral and antioxidant. When taken regularly, these nutrients will enhance your energy program. For each nutrient, start with the lowest recommended amount and work your way up to the level that is right for you. Unless noted, take them with food.

PROTEIN

Drinking a whey protein shake is a powerful way to begin your morning. Protein stabilizes blood glucose levels and provides nutritious fuel from the very start of your day. I prefer whey protein because it has a better branch chain amino acid profile, which translates into better metabolic control. A morning favorite of mine is an organic protein smoothie made from vanilla rice milk, a splash of orange juice, 1–2 scoops of vanilla whey protein powder (I prefer the Jarrow brand, available at most health food stores), a handful of blueberries, a banana, and either

a scoop of flax seed powder or a teaspoon of flax oil. Some days I like to use cranberries and blackberries, or extra vanilla. Experiment and have fun! You can even try this shake frozen, for a super thick, cold treat.

THE CARNITINE COUSINS

Acetyl-L-carnitine (ALC) is an amino acid-like compound related to choline that improves energy, alertness, and mood within an hour or two of ingestion. These effects are probably related to its important role in energy metabolism in the cell mitochondria, the body's tiny biochemical power generators. While ALC provides targeted support for healthy brain function, carnitine fumarate is a good choice for total body energy production. I recommend 250 mg of ALC, one to three times a day, and 200–500 mg of L-carnitine fumarate, one to three times a day. For body energy and brain energy, you can count on these carnitine cousins.

ALPHA LIPOIC ACID (ALA)

ALA is a special antioxidant that is both fat and water soluble. It's an excellent free-radical scavenger that is vital to energy production in cells and is a cofactor for vital enzymes that produce energy. ALA also stimulates the production of glutathione, which helps support energy and is the body's most important and abundant antioxidant. I recommend supplementing with 100 mg per day.

COENZYME Q10 (CoQ10)

CoQ10 is a nutrient that decreases naturally with age, and is an enzyme essential to energy production within cells. It is often called the "powerhouse" of cellular metabolism. A potent antioxidant that also supports a healthy heart, CoQ10 helps improve the body's use of oxygen and prevents free radical damage. CoQ10 probably isn't going to be one of those supplements that gives you an immediate boost—rather it is a long-term addition to your supplement program that will help ensure better energy levels throughout your life. For overall health and vitality, I recommend 10–30 mg two to three times per day.

ALGAE

I highly recommend that you take algae as part of your core program for overall health. Spirulina is an algae that can stabilize your energy and sharpen your mind. It's extremely high in protein, very low in fat, and rich in nutrients, active enzymes, and beta-carotene. Spirulina is a high-energy wholefood superstar that I enjoy several times a day. Sometimes I add a scoop to a smoothie and enjoy it before a walk or a workout at the gym. Both Nature's Way and Earthrise are reliable spirulina brands.

Chlorella is an algae with potent nutritional value. It's high in chlorophyll, vitamins, protein, and minerals. A very large body of research has shown that chlorella is as effective as a digestive aid and detoxifier of toxins and heavy metals.

Hormones

Adrenal supplements support adrenal function, the gland responsible for so much of your energy. Peak adrenal function can help you better withstand stress, recover your internal energy balance, and create energy reserves. For optimum energy production, I recommend products that come from New Zealand or Argentina, such as Enzymatic Therapy's Adrenal Cortex Complex or Adrenal Glandular Plus by Ethical Nutrients. They are available in health food stores.

Thyroid supplements support function of the thyroid, the part of the endocrine system that regulates metabolism. As the body ages, production of thyroid hormones diminishes, causing fatigue, dulling of mental faculties, depression, weight gain, constipation, aching joints, low blood pressure, high cholesterol, low libido, dry skin, brittle nails, hair loss, and sensitivity to cold. Supplementing with thyroid hormones can restore peak functioning. Life Enhancement makes a good product called Thyroplex, available in formulas for both men and women. Look for it in health food stores. Take on an empty stomach.

If you exercise regularly, 7-KETO DHEA is a powerful antioxidant that can help stabilize thyroid function to high-normal levels. It seems to create lean muscle mass if you exercise. I recommend 25 mg, two to three times per day, taken on an empty stomach.

Restore Your Energy With Sound Sleep

Throughout this report, I've given you important details about how to gain and retain real, quality energy so you'll feel vital and vigorous throughout the day. But, I don't want to stop there. Sufficient sleep at night is essential for recharging your batteries and is key for maintaining the energy you have during your waking hours.

Unfortunately, sleep is the one area of life that too many people, even healthy ones, spend little time improving. People have convinced themselves that sleep can be "made up"—that a few extra hours on the weekend will undo the damage of late nights and early mornings throughout the week. Not true.

A recent study from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine showed that too many nights of little sleep (fewer than six hours) could impair mental performance as much as not getting a wink for two nights in a row. The study went on to report that people who get less than eight hours of quality sleep per night have slower reaction times, more muddled thinking, and trouble performing simple memory tasks.

The body uses long rest periods to repair the damage done during the day. It's a time when every system in your body can focus internally on repair and rejuvenation. When you cheat sleep, your body is unable to complete its repairs.

Quality of sleep is just as important as quantity. Make sure you settle yourself down to rest

in a completely dark, quiet room. Replace a bright digital clock with one that has an unlit face. If you have a ticking clock, replace it with a silent version. Make sure you're sleeping on a comfortable mattress in a cool room. If you tend to get thirsty at night, keep a bottle of water by your bed to minimize your need to get out of bed. If you do have to get up in the middle of the night, don't turn on the lights.

★ ★ ★

We've talked about many things you can do to restore your youthful energy, from using adaptogens to help normalize and de-stress your body, to eating a nutritious and fortifying diet, to supplementing with targeted nutrients, to getting quality sleep. Start with the recommendations in this report. Each month, in *Naturally Well Today* I'll provide you with even more health tips and inside information that will help keep you going. Before long, you'll be looking for new ways to use all your newfound energy!

To Your Good Health!



Dr. Marcus Laux

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Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

Alzheimer's: The Secret Cause and How to Cure It

IN THIS SPECIAL REPORT

Lifestyle Factors 2

Environmental Factors 3

Genetics May Set the Stage
for Alzheimer's Disease 4

on simple and straightforward memory recall. The firm diagnosis of AD is based on agnosia (established memory impairment), with the presence of at least one of these cognitive deficits: apraxia (trouble with certain movements); aphasia (language impairment); or diminished executive capacity (an impaired ability to plan, sequence, organize, and reason abstractly).

People who are suspected of having AD typically undergo standard tests that include a wide range of systems because so many factors can create cognitive impairment. Our brains are highly sensitive, and are affected quickly by almost everything that we drink, eat, say, believe, do, and are exposed to. Some AD tests are for thyroid, liver, or kidney dysfunction. Others involve blood counts to look for infections—including syphilis and HIV. While still others are checks of electrolyte, glucose, homocysteine, and vitamin B12 levels.

To date, no contagious microbe, pathogen, or parasite has stood up as either the probable cause or a major contributor—except that one study has found a potential association with *Chlamydia* bacteria. The ultimate cause may well be a combination of lifestyle, environment, and genetic susceptibility—which I believe to be the case with most degenerative diseases.

In this report, I will show you how each one of these factors can contribute to mental decline and outline simple steps you can take to ensure your brain stays healthy and sharp for years to come.

BRAIN CHANGES FOR THE WORSE

At autopsy, the brains of people with AD exhibit characteristic changes in the cerebral cortex, basal

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is one of the best-known and most-dreaded of all degenerative diseases. An initial diagnosis is based on people making too-frequent mistakes

forebrain, and other areas. The characteristic plaques and tangles of proteins may be the result of scarring from altered proteins and abnormal cellular deposits.

The parts of the brain that are most affected are those that are largely stimulated by the neurotransmitter acetylcholine (AC)—and there is a correlation between AD and a lower-than-normal AC level. Trying to correct this deficiency is one of the primary approaches of both natural and pharmaceutical medicine—with varying degrees of success. The drug approach has been less than stellar, with a host (of course) of adverse effects.

Some enlightening research at the Rhode Island Hospital and Brown University Medical School has uncovered the fact that, in the early stages of AD, the brain's insulin levels and the number of insulin receptors both diminish considerably. The insulin levels continue to plummet as AD advances into late stages—by up to 80 percent. These findings are significant because previous work by the same senior researcher, Dr. Suzanne DeLaMonte, showed that insulin and other proteins are made inside the brain. This new evidence points in the direction of AD being in large part a neuroendocrine disorder.

Alzheimer's disease disrupts the brain's metabolism, setting it up for inflammation and cell death—which leads to cognitive malfunctions. Insulin resistance occurs when insulin and growth factor proteins (such as insulin growth factor-1, or IGF-1) have a diminished ability to bind to receptors. Without their influence, brain cells will fail and eventually die.

For the first time, the researchers at Brown University showed the clear connection that insulin and IGF-1 have to dementia. The two substances regulate the genetic expression for producing choline acetyltransferase—the enzyme pathway that is directly responsible for making AC. Higher levels increase AC production, but lower levels decrease it—which is exactly what we see in Alzheimer's. The more severe the disease, the more the patients are deficient of and resistant to insulin.

Essentially, it appears that AD may be a form of diabetes—a diabetes of the brain that is caused by an imbalanced metabolism. The imbalance creates insulin alterations and resistance that lead to growth factor deprivation, raging inflammation from poor brain energy production, and brain lesions and neuronal death from metabolic starvation. Therefore, maintaining healthy blood sugar levels is a key component to preventing AD.

Lifestyle Factors

The feeling of being tired or mentally fuzzy after a meal could be a red flag that your blood sugar is too high. Research at the University of Virginia Health System showed that higher blood sugar levels are more likely to be associated with more mistakes on tests of mental function—including reaction times and number subtraction. If this sounds like you, now would be the perfect time to turn the tide—before fuzziness advances to full-out dementia. Stabilizing your glucose level and insulin function, and correcting your body's imbalances, will naturally decrease inflammation. And dietary intervention is the perfect place to start.

By now, you certainly know the dangers of fast food, but recent research pointed out the effect of even the occasional burger and shake. In a 15-year study of over 3,000 people between ages 18 and 30, the folks who ate at fast-food establishments more than twice a week were twice as likely to develop insulin resistance. If you find that you're constantly on the go and don't have time to stop for a proper meal, then make it a habit to take along energy bars or meal-replacement bars and a bottle or two of water. There are several tasty bars out there, but watch out for added sugar—some of them are loaded with the stuff. Of course, bars that contain a lot of fruit may list a lot of sugar on the nutrition facts panel, but fruit sugar is okay. Instead, watch out for added sugar (and artificial sweeteners) in the list of ingredients.

FIXING THE FUZZ WITH A HEALTHY DIET

While avoiding fast food will help to keep you mentally sharp it certainly isn't the only thing you should do—especially if insulin resistance or diabetes is involved. When you do have time to sit down for a meal, make sure you are filling up on foods that won't adversely affect your blood sugar level. Research published in the December 2005 issue of the *Journal of Applied Physiology* suggests that a high-fiber diet that relies on whole grains, fruits, and vegetables can reverse diabetes and metabolic syndrome in a matter of weeks! The diet composition for the study was made by the Pritikin Center for Longevity and consisted of 15–20

percent protein (mostly soy and beans, some fish and poultry), 12–15 percent fat (less than half from saturated fat), and 65–70 percent complex carbohydrates. For more on the Pritikin Diet, visit pritikin.com.

The participants in the study were 31 obese men ranging in age from 46 to 76 years. All of them had either type 2 diabetes or metabolic syndrome, or had at least one risk factor for metabolic syndrome. The men were monitored with laboratory examinations of their blood for glucose levels, insulin, lipid profiles, and markers of inflammation.

Positive Results

After only three weeks, nearly half the men with type 2 diabetes had reversed their condition. Of those who had begun with full metabolic syndrome, more than half had beaten it. I would expect to see even further progress in the participants if the program had gone on for several more weeks.

There was improvement in the entire collection of risk factors that contribute to metabolic syndrome—such as high cholesterol, excess fat, hypertension, and insulin resistance. Blood tests showed major improvements in all lipid levels—including average LDL cholesterol, which dropped by 25 percent. Additionally, progress was made with C-reactive protein (CRP) levels and other inflammation markers. While the men lost an average of 2–3 pounds a week, they were still overweight when the study concluded—yet they made major improvements in their disease risk factors. Once again, if the program were continued for a longer period of time I would expect to see even more weight loss.

While the lifestyle change in diet was significant, an increase in physical activity was also an important factor in the study; the participants walked on both level and inclined surfaces for 45 to 60 minutes each day. Together, these changes earned the participants huge rewards by reversing the major risk factors for most of today's chronic and degenerative diseases. Although these results are very exciting, I want to emphasize that no one should go through life on restrictive diets. Whether it's the Pritikin Diet or some other such program, these "diets" are for intervention only. Typically, they don't provide the full range of nutrients necessary for complete health.

For long-term success, you need to work on your eating approach—such as following the Mediterranean style or any other healthy cultural model. You should think of restrictive diets like the Pritikin program as "boot camp"—from which you'll graduate as you move on to an overall healthier life. For instance, new Marines graduate from their boot camp after

12 weeks and then go on to live the military life for which they were trained. I suggest you do the same with any diet program you may choose—follow it until you achieve the results you want, and then move on to living a healthier life.

BOOST YOUR BRAIN WITH EXERCISE

As the above study demonstrates, exercise is important for balancing your glucose regulation. So, it should come as no surprise that it can also help prevent mental decline. A study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* tracked over 1,700 dementia-free people over age 65 for up to nine years. By the study's end, those who had exercised three or more times a week had a significantly lower risk of developing dementia. Intensity isn't as important as consistency. Remember, something as simple as walking regularly is enough to help your brain.

Mental exercise is another requirement for keeping your brain in tip-top shape. To emphasize how much effect using your brain power actually has on improving your mind, a study in *NeuroReport* showed that test subjects increased the levels of brain biomarkers in their hippocampus after only five weeks of using memory-based exercises. The changes were exactly the opposite of what is seen in patients with AD.

A more recent article by the same researcher, Dr. Michael Valenzuela in Australia, combined the data from 22 worldwide studies involving almost 30,000 people. He found that those people with a high mental stimulation had a 46 percent decreased risk of dementia. The protective effect was present even in later life as long as mentally stimulating activities were undertaken.

Your brain can regenerate when you exercise it with spatial tasks—either physical tasks that require you to see what you're doing (such as visiting places you haven't seen before) or mental tasks that require you to visualize concepts (such as working on geometry problems). Spatial exercises stimulate the hippocampus and produce more receptors—which helps the neural network process information more easily. In fact, your brain can be tuned up more quickly and easily than your body.

Becoming Cognitively Fit

Just as physical exercises are important in regaining or maintaining physical fitness, mental exercises are necessary for regaining and maintaining our cognitive fitness. And just as you must work out every muscle group in the body instead of just targeting the arms or legs, you must be sure to work out both halves of your brain—the right and left hemispheres.

The left hemisphere deals with specifics, deductive logic, analytical thinking (taking things apart), sequential processes, language, and temporal and spatial limitations. The right hemisphere deals with generalizations, intuition and emotions, synthetic thinking (putting things together), simultaneous processes, and pictures. The right side is also free from any sense of temporal and spatial boundaries.

Here are some excellent ways to have fun exercising both halves of your brain:

- ▶ Work on jigsaw puzzles to improve visual spatial skills and your synthetic thinking ability.
- ▶ Work on crossword puzzles, word scrambles, word searches, and hidden message games in newspapers or books to improve language skills and deductive reasoning abilities.
- ▶ Read books rather than watch TV—especially ones that require you to think.
- ▶ Take up hobbies that require you to learn new information or skills.
- ▶ Play bridge to develop analytical thinking, memorization skills, and an ability to focus on multiple levels simultaneously.
- ▶ Play chess to develop analytical processes and your ability to reach logical deductions as you plan strategic moves well in advance.
- ▶ Go out and meet new people whose names and especially faces you'll have to remember, and with whom you can discuss intellectual issues.
- ▶ Drive different routes to the places you go on a regular basis.
- ▶ Change the order in the way you approach such everyday tasks as shaving. In other words, don't allow yourself to get into a rut in the way you conduct any aspect of your life.

There are many more ways to keep your mind spry, flexible, and in shape. Just remember that exercising your brain is every bit as important as exercising your body. Thinking—that's the way to keep the brain active and young!

Environmental Factors

In addition to lifestyle factors, there are environmental concerns that may increase your risk of mental health problems. A well known example is mercury. This heavy metal has no known beneficial biological uses in the body, and any exposure to it is always a significant risk—especially to the health of our minds. Mercury contamination is more widespread than once believed, and at levels higher than previously reported.

What is extremely disturbing to me is the still-accepted use of mercury in medicine and dentistry. It is still found in vaccines given to children and adults as a preservative called thimerosal, and it is still used in conventional amalgam dental fillings—which means that when we chew, the mercury in our dental fillings vaporizes, so it is either ingested with our food or absorbed through our mucous membranes and into our blood. However, rather than focus on medical and dental uses of mercury, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has warned Congress that the greatest risk is from eating mercury-contaminated fish.

I agree that seafood can also be a threat. Mercury toxicity from eating fish is especially worrisome for pregnant women since methylmercury can easily cross the placenta and cause serious damage to the nervous system of a developing fetus (even though the omega-3 fatty acids in fish are important nutrients for brain development). In fact, both the FDA and EPA warn that all women of child-bearing age (as well as young children) should avoid eating shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish—since these species are known to contain high levels of methylmercury. The EPA also notes that one in six pregnant women in the US have blood mercury levels high enough to create fetal damage.

While avoiding the fish on the above list is a good place to start, the truth is that most fish contain some level of mercury nowadays. However, it is the longer-lived and larger predator fish that can bio-accumulate a dangerous level—which means that some fish are more prone to have higher levels than others. As a rule, bluefin and yellowfin (ahi) tuna are larger than albacore, and thus much more likely to have high levels of mercury. So, when you eat fish, be sure to look for wild varieties of small fish (such as sardines) or younger varieties of wild-caught predator fish (such as albacore and salmon).

A partial list of potential mercury sources includes: agricultural chemicals, air conditioner filters, plastics, bug zappers, fluorescent lights, car exhaust, cosmetics (particularly mascara), headlights, certain paints, “green tip” or “low-mercury” fluorescent lamps, compact fluorescent “twirly” bulbs, thermostats, thermometers, mercury switches, and alkaline and nickel-cadmium batteries (including the button batteries for watches, thermometers, and hearing aids).

Unfortunately, there's not much you can do about the use of mercury in many of these products

except to write your congressional representative to look into the matter and draft laws regarding the use of this heavy metal. One bright spot is that, more than 30 years ago, the FDA banned mercury in all cosmetics except mascara—which means that you should make certain your cosmetics are “made in the USA.” Of course, it also means that you should forego using mascara (or at least severely limit your use of it).

Additionally, check with your local waste-disposal company and be sure to follow proper procedures for discarding products that might contain mercury (so they won't contaminate our soil). And, of course, always try to buy “mercury-free” products if you can find them.

Genetics May Set the Stage for Alzheimer's Disease

At the start of this report, I mentioned that there is also a genetic component to AD. Research out of Johns Hopkins University reveals that people who have a gene form called APO-E2 are somewhat protected against AD, while those who have the APO-E4 form are at higher risk. However, your genes are not your destiny—they're only the stage on which your choices act. Studies following 500 identical twins showed that AD is not a directly inherited disease. For instance, one twin might get Alzheimer's while the other twin does not. So in the end, it's all about the diet and lifestyle choices you make.

★ ★ ★

While some mental decline may be a normal part of aging, full-out dementia and Alzheimer's is not. By making some simple lifestyle changes, you can help ensure your brain has the nourishment it needs to stay healthy and fit. Why not get started now?

To Your Good Health,

Dr. Marcus Laux

Dr. Marcus Laux

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Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

Today's Greatest Vitamin Values

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Would you like to have a quick reference guide for finding specific products that address some of the most common health complaints? Something you could access at a glance? Now you have it with "Today's Greatest Vitamin Values." When you need to find a supplement to ease your arthritis or a phospholipid to boost your mental clarity, you can turn to this report.

With your subscription to *Naturally Well Today*

you'll receive other special reports that dig deeper into these subjects. But this report is meant to be a handy reference guide to use again and again for help with health challenges like seasonal allergies, digestive upset, a cold, or flu. It's organized alphabetically by condition, with products I recommend listed under each condition, to make it easy to use while you shop in a health food store, grocery store, or online.

Allergies

Allergic reactions to pollen and other airborne pollutants are becoming a worldwide problem. It's difficult to find a pharmaceutical drug for

allergy symptoms that consistently works well without side effects. Conventional physicians often treat allergies by identifying an allergen and then administering a series of shots with progressively more of the allergen in each injection, in an effort to build up the patient's immunity and eliminate the symptoms. Unfortunately, this can slowly wear down the patient's immunity instead. For most people there are less invasive and more effective therapies for dealing with allergy symptoms.

Aller-Leaf Liquid Phyto-Caps from Gaia Herbs (888-917-8269 or www.gaiaherbs.com) is my favorite product for fast relief of itchy eyes, scratchy throat, mild congestion, and annoying nasal irritation. This formula is ecologically wildcrafted, certified organic, non-alcoholic, and fast acting. When I use it, I can start feeling relief in just minutes! Take two caps with a warm tea every couple of hours until you feel relief. Then take it between meals, 2–3 times per day.

Butterbur root has a long history as a treatment for seasonal allergy symptoms and headaches. A two-week study compared the effects of butterbur versus the antihistamine Zyrtec (cetirizine) on 125 hay fever patients. Sixty-four patients were given the antihistamine; 61 received a butterbur extract. Results suggested that butterbur was just as effective as the Zyrtec at reducing hay fever symptoms, including nasal congestion, itchy eyes, and sneezing. In addition, more than 15 percent of those taking Zyrtec reported drowsiness and fatigue; those taking butterbur extract did not

experience these side effects. (*BMJ* 02;324:144) The standardized, patented form of butterbur root extract is known as Petadolex. I recommend Enzymatic Therapy's Petadolex, which is available in health food stores.

Xlear Nasal Wash (pronounced "clear") is a unique blend of xylitol and saline that keeps nasal tissues clean and moist, guards against environmental pollutants and allergens, and flushes out irritants. I recommend using Xlear regularly during allergy seasons. It's available online at www.xlear.com or by calling 877-599-5327.

Stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*) or itch weed, which has stinging hairs on its leaves and stem, has been used in traditional medicine for many conditions, including rheumatism and prostate enlargement. It also has powerful anti-inflammatory properties due to the histamine found in its leaves.

In a double-blind study published in *Planta Medica* (1990), people with allergic rhinitis (hay fever) were given freeze-dried stinging nettle extract (300 mg) or a placebo. After one week, 58 percent of those who took stinging nettle rated it as moderately effective, while only 37 percent of the placebo group noted improvement. Stinging nettle seems to block the formation of inflammatory chemicals. I recommend Nettles from the Eclectic Institute in Oregon (800-332-4372).

Garlic and onions are rich in quercetin, a natural substance that calms allergy and asthma symptoms. Add these to your diet on a regular basis for supporting free-flowing airways and clear nasal passages.

Avoid alcohol, particularly wine, if you are sensitive to sulfites, which can heighten allergic symptoms. In the United States, only wines that contain sulfites in excess of ten parts per million carry warning labels, but all wines contain some sulfites.

Arthritis

If you have arthritis and have gone to a conventional medical practitioner for help, you may have been told arthritis is incurable, a result of your

age or genetics, and you just have to live with its symptoms. Before you resort to the chronic use of harsh drugs with significant side effects, you should thoroughly investigate safer, proven alternative treatments that can stabilize, improve, and even reverse osteoarthritis.

Lubriflex is a product that contains a proprietary blend of two Chinese herbal extracts, Acacia and Chinese skullcap. A recent human study showed that the combination of these two herbs targeted 5-LO, a little-known enzyme highly involved with inflammation and the pain that accompanies it. The combination also worked on the better-known COX-2 enzyme, but without the side effects of COX-2-inhibiting drugs. The dosage used in the study was 250 mg, twice daily, which is what you'll find in Lubriflex. You can purchase it through Swanson Health Products (800-824-4491 or www.swansonvitamins.com).

Wobenzym N, both in tablet and cream form, can provide fast, powerful relief for arthritis symptoms. This formula, by Naturally Vitamins, contains several digestive enzymes including bromelain from pineapple stems, papain from papayas, and trypsin, chymotrypsin, and pancreatin from animal sources. These systemic enzymes can help beat the most nagging and persistent cases of joint discomfort. Take 3–5 tablets, 2–4 times a day a half hour before or two hours after eating. Use the topical cream as needed. Wobenzym N is available at most health food stores or through Swanson Health Products.

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) and **hops flower extract** (*Humulus lupulus*) combined have been shown to relieve osteoarthritis pain in clinical studies. The two herbs work by inhibiting pain-producing COX-2 enzymes but—like Lubriflex—without the alarming potential side effects of drugs. Enzymatic Therapy's FlexAgility MAX offers both herbs in a proprietary blend. It is available in health food stores. Take one softgel two times a day with meals.

Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM) is a naturally occurring compound found in some foods—primarily fruits, vegetables, meat, milk,

The Versatility of SAME

S-adenosyl-methionine (SAME, pronounced “Sammy”) is found in every living cell and functions throughout the body every day in biochemical processes. Supplemental SAME is used in Europe for treating depression, liver disorders, osteoarthritis, and fibromyalgia. In the US, it has been introduced to support joint health, mood, and emotional well-being. It may also be clinically beneficial for migraine headaches, Parkinson’s disease, epilepsy, and arthrosclerosis.

SAME is highly unstable, has very low bioavailability (less than one percent), and has a half-life of only 80 minutes. Additionally, 38 percent of it is eliminated from the body within 72 hours. All of this is why recommended dosages of SAME are typically high and why good manufacturing is essential to an effective SAME product. Knoll Pharmaceuticals’ SAME is in the most stable form available—tosylate and 1,4-butanedisulfonate salts—and the tablets are enteric coated, protecting them from moisture. Knoll imports its SAME into the US under the name MoodPlus by Nature Made. It is available in grocery and drugstores. Visit www.naturemade.com to find a store near you.

and seafood—human blood, and tissues. It has been shown to relieve arthritic and other types of musculoskeletal pain. MSM can only be purified by crystallization and distillation. Distillation uses heat to separate pure MSM from impurities. At a boiling point of 478 degrees F, pure MSM can completely separate from the solution, producing the purest MSM available. In the crystallization process, the purity of MSM is largely dependent on the quality of raw materials and on manufacturing procedure. Some manufacturers use crystallization because it’s cheaper, but the industry prefers distillation.

Bergstrom (formerly Cardinal) Nutrition, a pioneer in MSM technology, produces one of the purest forms available. This company adheres to the highest quality control standards and has always

used distillation to purify its MSM product. Bergstrom Nutrition has been highly active in initiating clinical research on MSM, and their product, OptiMSM, is the only MSM product I recommend. It is available in many health food stores. For more information, visit www.bergstromnutrition.com.

Low-molecular-weight chondroitin sulfate and **glucosamine sulfate**. Chondroitin sulfate supports the strength and resiliency of cartilage, and promotes the production of proteoglycans, molecules that hold water in cartilage. Chondroitin is not easily absorbed, so I recommend using a low-molecular-weight chondroitin, which has a much higher absorption rate. Glucosamine is a building block of proteoglycans and a component of chondroitin sulfate. It lubricates joints, reduces synovial inflammation, stimulates new cartilage cell growth, and helps rebuild damaged cartilage.

I recommend 1,500 mg of glucosamine sulfate and 1,200 mg of chondroitin sulfate daily. (By the way, researchers have found that 1,500 mg glucosamine can be taken once a day, instead of 500 mg three times per day.) Glucosamine-chondroitin products I like are GS-500 and Chondroitin by Enzymatic Therapy, which combines glucosamine sulfate with low-molecular-weight, marine-source chondroitin sulfate, or MaxiLIFE Glucosamine/Chondroitin Sulfate by Twinlab. Both are available in health food stores.

Cancer

Cancer turns the body against itself, though it is not an autoimmune disease. Reducing our risk of getting cancer requires active measures. Adding cruciferous vegetables to the diet is one very good way to boost the immune system. In addition, the following supplements can help:

Active hexose correlated compound (AHCC) has been shown in clinical studies to significantly improve the immune response and increase production of the body’s natural cancer-fighting agents. The AHCC product I recommend is American Biosciences’ ImmPower, available at The Vitamin Shoppe (800-223-1216 or www.vitaminshoppe.com). Take 2–6 capsules daily in divided doses.

Immune Fx. One of the most common complementary cancer therapies is the use of medicinal mushrooms. Mushrooms are effective against cancer because they contain substances called beta-glucans, which have been shown to stimulate the production of immune cells. Several types of mushrooms have been found to strengthen immune response and increase production of the body's natural cancer-fighting agents, and Immune Fx combines the power of these mushrooms into one capsule. Immune Fx contains high concentrations of beta-glucans extracted from six of the most powerful medicinal mushrooms: *Agaricus blazei* Murill (ABM), *Coriolus versicolor* (see below), maitake, *Cordyceps sinensis*, reishi, and shiitake. This supplement is meant to be taken in conjunction with surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy. Before you start taking Immune Fx you should talk to your physician. The suggested dose is 2–6 capsules per day. You can purchase Immune Fx at pharmacies and health food stores. For more information or to find a retailer near you, call 866-334-2463.

Coriolus versicolor. Of all species of mushrooms used in traditional East Asian medicine, *Coriolus* is the most thoroughly researched. More than 400 studies have demonstrated the ability of *Coriolus* to stimulate immune system function in both healthy people and those affected by chronic conditions such as cancer. I like MushroomScience's *Coriolus* product, VPS *Coriolus Versicolor*. You can order it directly from MushroomScience (888-283-6583 or www.mushroomscience.com).

DIM, a phytonutrient (plant nutrient) found in cruciferous vegetables and produced in the body, lowers the level of harmful estrogen metabolites that can promote tumor growth in hormone-sensitive cells. The vast majority of cancer research on humans has been conducted using the precursor to DIM, I3C, which converts to DIM in the stomach. There are two ways to raise levels of DIM: Eat more cruciferous vegetables, or supplement with a bioavailable form of DIM. Two products I recommend are Bioresponse DIM (877-312-5777 or www.bioresponse.com) and Tyler Indolplex

Use Wobenzym N to Tame the Flames of Inflammation

I mentioned the use of Wobenzym N for addressing arthritis symptoms, but it can be used for other inflammation-related conditions as well.

Chronic inflammation may be the underlying factor in most heart-related incidents. Proteolytic enzymes (like those in Wobenzym N) circulate throughout the body, breaking down proteins that pollute and overcrowd the blood, making red blood cells more flexible, and removing excess fibrin.

For circulatory support, I recommend five tablets of Wobenzym N, 2–3 times per day (for a total of 10–15 per day). Wobenzym N is available in health food stores or through Swanson Health Products (800-824-4491 or www.swansonvitamins.com).

by Integrative Therapeutics, available from N.E.E.D.S. (800-634-1380 or www.needs.com).

Haelan is a Chinese soybean beverage rich in the isoflavones genistein and daidzen. Isoflavones have been shown to counter free-radical damage, protect genes from mutating, and inhibit angiogenesis (the growth of new blood vessels that feed tumors). Haelan 951 is the latest version of this drink. It is available in health food stores or from Haelan Products (800-542-3526 or www.haelanproducts.com).

Cholesterol

High cholesterol by itself isn't a health problem; it's an indicator of a potential health problem. It is possible, though, that if your cholesterol is high (above 200 mg/dL), your doctor will want to start you on a statin drug and also give you a bile acid sequestering agent to absorb cholesterol-containing bile acids in the gastrointestinal tract. Be aware that statins have potential side effects (liver toxicity, muscle inflammation, and gastrointestinal disturbances), and they reduce your body's production of coenzyme Q10. Bile-acid-sequestering agents may cause gastrointestinal

(GI) problems and inhibit the absorption of vitamins A, D, E, and K. If you have high cholesterol, before you agree to take mainstream drugs, try the following time-proven agents to naturally reduce your cholesterol levels:

Flaxseed is a rich source of omega-3 essential fatty acids, which help control cholesterol. Take 1/4 cup of freshly ground flaxseed daily. Any organically grown flaxseed is fine and can be found in most health food stores.

Garlic lowers LDL cholesterol and is used to treat hypertension and other cardiovascular disorders. The recommended dose is one raw clove per day. If you can't fit this much garlic into your diet, I recommend taking 300 mg of a garlic supplement. I like Garlinase 4000 by Enzymatic Therapy and recommend taking one tablet every day.

Gugulipid, the refined extract of an herb native to India, helps the liver break down cholesterol. Regular use of gugulipid can effectively lower both LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels. The recommended dose is 500 mg twice daily with meals. I recommend Gugulmax by Nature's Herbs and GugulPlus by Enzymatic Therapy, which are available in health food stores, or VRP's Gugulipid Extract, which is available at www.vrp.com.

Plant sterols are plant fats found in raw fruits and vegetables, vegetable oils, and legumes. They fit neatly into the body's cholesterol receptors, thereby reducing absorption of cholesterol. Unfortunately, most of us get very few plant sterols from our diet due to modern food processing techniques. You can get concentrated doses in cholesterol-lowering spreads such as Benecol and in supplements. In one study, subjects given a plant-sterol-rich spread experienced a 10 to 15 percent reduction in LDL cholesterol compared to placebo. If you prefer to take a plant sterol supplement, I like Cholesteryl Plus by Enzymatic Therapy.

HDL booster is an effective physician-formulated supplement created by Dennis Goodman, M.D., the former chief of cardiology at The Scripps Memorial Hospital. While most cholesterol supplements focus on lowering cholesterol levels, this product promotes healthy

HDL ("good") cholesterol. Its robust combination of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antioxidants and herbs has been shown to increase good cholesterol by 23%. Take 2 tablets twice a day with food. HDL Booster is sold through Enzymatic Therapy. Contact them to locate stores near you that sell their products (800-783-2286 or www.enzy.com).

Constipation

If you've ever been constipated, you've probably tried over-the-counter (OTC) remedies that have brought temporary relief. Suppository glycerine enemas, like Fleet, are effective when time is of the essence. When overnight timing is sufficient, try a senna herbal extract product like Senokot, or milk of magnesia. These are naturally derived products with a long history of use and safety, and they work with minimal discomfort.

Instead of waiting for constipation to strike and then treating symptoms, it's better to take steps to prevent the condition from taking hold in the first place. There are no more effective tools for a healthy gastrointestinal tract than exercise, drinking plenty of water, and eating a whole foods diet rich in soluble and insoluble fiber. I also recommend a few additional tools.

Chlorella tablets are a sure-fire way to keep your bowels moving. Chlorella has an indigestible cell wall that stimulates peristalsis (the muscle contraction that moves substances through the esophagus, stomach, and intestines) and detoxifies. I recommend chlorella tablets from Sun Chlorella USA (www.sunchlorellausa.com; 800-829-2828). Follow directions on the label. Start with a low dose and work up to a level that's right for you.

Flaxseed is a good source of protein and is loaded with soluble and insoluble fiber. A quarter-cup of flaxseed contains a whopping 20 grams of fiber, an amount that will put you well on your way toward the optimal fiber intake of 30 grams per day. It will also help regulate your bowels. Any organically grown flaxseed is fine and can be found in most health food stores.

(Continued on page 7)

Top 20 Best Foods for Lasting Health

1. **Cruciferous vegetables** are especially rich in isothiocyanates and glucosinolates, powerful detoxifying substances that can help break down cancer-causing chemicals. The cruciferous family includes broccoli, Brussels sprouts, horseradish, kale, kohlrabi, turnips, and bok choy. Research has shown that eating cabbage more than once a week makes a person one-third as likely to develop cancer of the colon as someone who never eats cabbage.
2. **Avocados** are cholesterol-free and sodium-free. Ounce-per-ounce, avocados contain more vitamin E, glutathione, folate, magnesium, and potassium than the 20 most-frequently consumed fruits.
3. **Hummus** is made from chickpeas, onions, and garlic. Chickpeas are chock-full of fiber, slow-releasing complex carbohydrates, and vitamins. Garlic and onions are immune-boosting, natural antibiotics.
4. **Garlic** contains 200 biologically active compounds, many of which play a role in preventing cancer and lowering cholesterol.
5. **Cold-water, wild seafood** (salmon, tuna, herring, mackerel, or any fish with teeth) contains linolenic acid, an omega-3 fat. Studies have repeatedly linked regular consumption of cold-water fish to better brain function and decreased risk of cancer and heart disease.
6. **Sea vegetables** such as dulse, kelp, alaria, laver, and nori contain all 56 minerals, boasting the highest amounts of magnesium, iron, iodine, and selenium of all vegetables. They are also packed with trace elements, beta-carotene, vitamin B12, niacin, vitamin B5, and vitamins A, C, and E.
7. **Chlorophyll** is found in green foods. It inhibits the growth of harmful bacteria and removes them from your body, acting as a cleansing product.
8. **Spirulina** is also rich in chlorophyll and trace elements. It has three times more vitamin E than raw wheat germ and is high in gamma linoleic acid (GLA), vitamin B12, and antioxidant enzymes.
9. **Chlorella**, a fresh water algae, has the highest chlorophyll content of all known plants. Regular intake of chlorella will help regulate bowel movements and promote natural detoxification.
10. **Cereal grasses**, such as oat, millet, wheat, corn, barley, or rye are harvested before the stem and branches start forming, when the plant has the highest levels of protein, chlorophyll, and nutrients. They contain all the essential amino acids.
11. **Animal, whey, or rice protein.**
12. **A balance of omega-3, 6, and 9 oils** in macadamias and walnuts, olives, and seeds such as flax, pumpkin, sunflower, and sesame.
13. **Nuts** are packed with health-boosting essential fatty acids, vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
14. **Organic eggs** are an excellent source of protein, choline, lutein, and zeaxanthin. They can contain up to 20 percent more omega-3 fats than non-organic eggs.
15. **Organic kalamata olives** are a rich source of polyphenols and minerals. They are an alkaline food, so they may also help to lower blood sugar.

Top 20 Best Foods for Lasting Health (continued)

16. **Sea salt** has nutritional sustenance, unlike refined bleached salt that has been stripped of all nutrients and health-promoting benefits. Real sea salt contains mostly sodium chloride, but it also has approximately 80 other valuable nutrients.
17. **Green tea** is a great way to boost your metabolism. An additional, interesting fact: The polyphenols in green (and black) tea are reported to stop smelly breath.
18. **Clean, natural spring water.**
19. **Hot cayenne pepper and yellow mustard** have been found to raise metabolism when eaten together in amounts of 3 g each, according to researchers in England.

20. **Chocolate** is much better for you than you think. According to the US Department of Agriculture and the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, dark chocolate has been shown to provide twice the antioxidant activity of prunes and thirteen times more than spinach. A review in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reports that high-quality chocolate can provide important nutrients. In addition, in a small study reported in *JAMA*, patients given 100 grams (about 3.5 ounces) of dark chocolate a day saw their blood pressure decrease an average of 5 mm Hg systolic (the top number), and 2 mm Hg diastolic (the bottom number). *Note:* Don't run out and start gobbling down chocolate—100 grams of chocolate has nearly 500 calories.

(Continued from page 5)

Diabetes

Diabetes can strike at any time. It appears to have a hereditary predisposition with environmental triggers, such as poor diet, exposure to chemical toxins, viral infections, or free-radical damage.

Millions of people actually have diabetes and don't know it. Type 2 diabetes, which typically occurs later in life (as opposed to type 1, which usually develops in young people), can generally be controlled through weight loss, diet, and exercise. To help stave off this debilitating disease, I recommend the following nutrients:

Chromium is a trace mineral that increases the body's sensitivity to insulin and helps reduce blood sugar levels. The recommended dose is 400 mcg of chromium picolinate or polynicotinate daily, taken with meals. Look for chromium picolinate by Twinlab in health food stores.

Gymnema sylvestre is a plant from central and south India that has been used medicinally

since the sixth century BC. It promotes healthy blood sugar levels and helps nourish and maintain the integrity of the pancreas. The recommended dose is 200–400 mg daily. Natrol's *Gymnema sylvestre* extract is among the most pure. You can find it in many health food stores.

Bitter Melon (*Momordica charantia*) is a fruit that grows in Africa, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean. It's used as food and medicine to treat a variety of conditions. In clinical studies it has shown tremendous promise for controlling diabetes. Research in India and Germany indicates that bitter melon extract may be just as effective at glucose control as insulin injections. Nature's Herbs makes an excellent bitter melon product. Check for it in health food stores.

Grapeseed extract is a powerful tool for protecting blood vessels and capillaries from free-radical damage and preventing diabetic retinopathy. The recommended initial dose of grapeseed extract is 1 mg per pound of body weight for the first week, taken in divided doses with meals.

(Round your weight to the nearest 50 pounds. For example, if you weigh 210 pounds, take 200 mg a day for the first week.) Continue with a maintenance dose of one-half of the initial amount. I like Grape Seed (PCO) Phytosome by Enzymatic Therapy because it is more bioavailable than most. You can find it in health food stores.

Magnesium is a mineral that's essential for regulating calcium levels and maintaining healthy blood pressure and circulation—all crucial for someone with diabetes. The recommended daily dose of magnesium is 300–500 mg daily. I like Albion chelated magnesium, which is sold under the Carlson Laboratories label (888-234-5656 or www.carlsonlabs.com).

Vanadyl sulfate is the trace mineral form of the element vanadium. It mimics the action of insulin, increases insulin sensitivity, and helps reduce blood sugar levels. The recommended dose ranges from 45–150 mg daily. It should be taken only under a physician's care, with frequent monitoring of blood sugar levels. I like Country Life's Vanadyl Sulfate Caps. It and other vanadyl sulfate products are available at health food stores.

Cinnamon has emerged as a blood sugar controller of significant importance. Research shows that an extract of cinnamon, methylhydroxychalcone polymer (MHCP), acts similarly to insulin and may be helpful in both prevention and for blood sugar control. It appears to work synergistically with insulin. Just using the spice on food can help. Sprinkle it on your oatmeal or have some whole-grain cinnamon toast in the morning.

Two natural products that can help battle diabetic neuropathy are alpha lipoic acid and gamma linolenic acid:

Alpha lipoic acid (ALA) helps reduce the risk of diabetic neuropathy by protecting against free-radical damage to nerves. The recommended dose is 50–100 mg per day taken with meals. The ALA products from Jarrow, Country Life, and Source Naturals are very good.

Gamma linolenic acid (GLA), an omega-6 essential fatty acid, is integral to healthy nerve

function, making it an effective therapy for diabetic peripheral neuropathy. Diabetics often have problems converting dietary fats to GLA in the body. The recommended dose is 240–480 mg per day of GLA derived from borage or evening primrose oil. I like Twinlab's Ultra GLA 300, derived from borage oil. It's available at health food stores.

Combination diabetes products. Several companies manufacture combination products to support blood sugar levels naturally. This is an easy way to get a number of the nutrients I've mentioned for promoting healthy blood sugar levels. For example, Jarrow's Glucose Optimizer includes alpha lipoic acid, *Gymnema sylvestre*, bitter melon, vitamin E, bilberry and green tea extract. Enzymatic Therapy's Doctor's Choice for Glucose Regulation includes vitamins E, C, and B6; magnesium; chromium; and *Gymnema sylvestre* extract. These brands are available in health food stores.

Digestion

If you've ever heard the adage "trust your gut," you can take it literally. Digestion—the process of separating the pure from the impure and absorbing the pure—is so important that it's been said that life and death often start in the colon.

Plant enzymes. Digestive enzymes are complex proteins that orchestrate the chemical breakdown reactions necessary for proper digestion and absorption. Without them, digestion doesn't happen. You can improve your digestive fortitude by adding plant digestive enzymes to the supplements you take daily at meal times. Take plant enzymes at the start of your meal, to more fully digest your food, to increase your nutrient availability, and to decrease exposure to potential antigens (partially digested food particles that can stimulate food allergies). Take 1–2 capsules with a snack and 2–4 capsules with your meal, depending on your needs. I like Vitase Digestion Formula from Prevail.

Probiotics deliver friendly, live beneficial bacteria to your gastrointestinal tract. Look for a product that contains lactobacillus (*L. acidophilus* and *L. bulgaricus*) and bifidobacteria (*B. longum* and *B. bifidum*). Brands I recommend

are Bio-K Plus from Bio-K Plus International (800-593-2465 or www.biokplus.com), and Acidophilus Pearls from Enzymatic Therapy. Go to www.enzy.com or call 800-783-2286 to find a store location near you.

Herbal bitters are the European answer to digestive stress. In fact, they are often referred to as digestives or aperitifs. They work fast for most every minor digestive need, from heartburn and reflux to bloating and gas pains. Enzymatic Therapy's Iberogast is one of my favorites. Another is Gaia Herbs' Sweetish Bitters. They can both be found in health food stores.

Peppermint tea stimulates bile flow and promotes stomach secretions. Drink a cup of peppermint tea 30 minutes before your meal. Traditional Medicinals and Long Life Teas have nice organic peppermint tea.

German chamomile flowers reduce inflammation and stomach spasms. Have a cup of chamomile tea between meals to soothe your digestive tract, or try Eclectic Institute's Chamomile gel caps (800-332-4372 or www.eclecticherb.com).

Ginger root has many digestive properties, but is especially good at dispelling gas. Dry powdered ginger root is also helpful for easing nausea. Fresh ginger root is available in the produce section of most grocery stores and can be steeped in hot water to make a restorative tea.

Fennel seeds help reduce gas and prevent bloating after a rich meal. Chew two or three seeds immediately after eating. Fennel seeds can be found in the spice section of almost any grocery store.

Fatigue

For decades, Eastern European medical and pharmacological texts have recommended **Rhodiola rosea**, or **Golden Root**, to relieve mental fatigue. It appears to provide immediate, short-term results, relieving the temporary mental and physical exhaustion associated with occasional high-stress situations or sleepless nights.

Studies have noted rhodiola's balancing effects on the stress hormones norepinephrine,

epinephrine, serotonin, and cortisol. It has also been shown to enhance adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the energy that powers cells, and increase fatty acids in the blood, both of which improve physical performance and endurance. In one double-blind, placebo-controlled study on healthy students, an extract standardized to both salidroside and rosavins—the main constituents identified to date—demonstrated significant improvements in physical fitness, mental fatigue, neuro-motor tests, and general well-being after administration of a repeated low dose.

When choosing supplemental rhodiola, look for a product standardized for both rosavins (3 percent) and salidroside (0.8 to 1 percent). Clinical trials suggest an effective dosage to be 150–300 mg daily. Try Jarrow Formulas (www.jarrow.com).

Heartburn

If you experience indigestion every day, you should take a closer look at the health of your digestive system. A major overhaul of your lifestyle and diet is probably in order. For occasional heartburn, try **Acid-Ease**, a digestive enzyme product from Prevail, which contains plant enzymes and gamma oryzanol, both of which help ease digestive discomfort. (It doesn't contain proteases, so you won't experience pain when you use it if you have gastritis or an ulcer.) Acid-Ease is available at health food stores, or call 800-783-2286 to find a store near you that carries this product.

Another alternative is Enzymatic Therapy's **Heartburn Free** with ROH10. It is a patented product using orange peel extract. Take one capsule half an hour before or one hour after meals, with water. You can find it at health food stores.

Hypertension

Hypertension triples your risk of dying from a heart attack, quadruples your risk of heart failure, and puts you at seven times greater risk for stroke! It is estimated that 40 million Americans are battling this life-threatening condition at any given time. Hypertension is often referred to as the silent killer, because the symptoms can be subtle or nonexistent. Here are my recommendations to lower your risk:

Holistrol has only been available in the US for a short time, but is one of the most effective natural products for blood pressure I've found. It's based on an ancient Tibetan formula that has been updated using modern technology. The original formula needed to be taken in amounts so large that most people today would not be willing to stay on it very long. Rulin Xiu, PhD, devised a way to reformulate it to maintain the potency but reduce the pill size.

Research on Holistrol's blood pressure-lowering effects was highlighted at the 2003 Inter-American Society of Hypertension conference, sponsored by the American Heart Association. The double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized study involved 19 people with blood pressure readings between 140–159 mm Hg systolic and 90–99 mm Hg diastolic. In most, blood pressure dropped within normal ranges in just four weeks. The average decrease in systolic pressure was 14.2 mm Hg, while the average decrease in diastolic was 9.9 mm Hg. The study lasted for eight weeks.

In addition, after the Holistrol was stopped at the eight-week mark, the blood pressures that improved stayed in the healthy ranges for a month or more. There have also been significant positive study outcomes for this supplement in China.

The individual ingredients in Holistrol—holly leaf, hawthorn berry, and daikon radish—have been used traditionally for centuries. They are safe, time-tested, nontoxic ingredients, all of which have been successful separately in improving circulation and lowering blood pressure. Interestingly, however, the proprietary combination in Holistrol is more effective than taking all three of these as separate supplements. In other words, Holistrol is more than the sum of its parts.

Holistrol is available in the US through Pharm East, the company that formulated and manufactures it. You can order Holistrol by calling 888-275-3570 or by visiting www.holistrol.com.

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is a potent antioxidant critical to cellular energy production, especially in the heart. The recommended dose is 180–360 mg daily. Enzymatic Therapy's Vitaline

The Best and Worst Types of Soy

What's the best way to get the most out of your soy consumption? Use cultured soy products such as natto, tempeh, miso, and tamari. These are the soy foods most often used in clinical trials because of digestibility. Uncultured soy, such as tofu, soymilk, or isolated soy protein, need friendly flora in the gut to convert genistein, soy's beneficial isoflavone, to an active phytoestrogen. If the digestive tract is not functioning optimally, like most people's, this conversion can't take place. Cultured soy just makes it easier on your body.

Smart Q10 is the brand used in a number of scientific studies of this nutrient.

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) has been used in the treatment of hypertension, high cholesterol, and other cardiovascular disorders. The recommended daily dose is one raw clove or 300 mg of a powdered garlic extract. I like Garlinase 4000 by Enzymatic Therapy. Look for it in health food stores.

Hawthorn helps fortify and dilate blood vessels, thereby improving the flow of blood, oxygen, and other essential nutrients to the heart and the rest of the body. The recommended dose is 100–250 mg daily. Enzymatic Therapy's Hawthorn Phytosome is an excellent product.

Magnesium is essential for regulating calcium levels and maintaining healthy blood pressure and circulation. I highly recommend using a magnesium glycinate product that is easily absorbed but doesn't loosen your stool. KAL or Doctor's Best are two good brands. Take 1–2 doses, 2 times daily with food.

Olive leaf extract is known for its antiviral effects, for strengthening the immune system, and for treating candidiasis. It has also been shown to be great for lowering blood pressure, and research on animals indicates that olive leaf extract protects low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol from oxidation. Nature's Way Olive Leaf Extract

sets the standard here. Another good choice is Enzymatic Therapy's Olive Leaf Extract with Hawthorn. Look for them in health food stores.

Stevia rebaudiana is an herb used worldwide as a sweetener. Its leaves contain stevioside, a glycoside shown to support normal blood pressure. Studies indicate that stevioside works by preventing calcium from entering cells; this slow release of calcium into the blood vessels helps maintain healthy blood pressure. In a double-blind placebo-controlled study of 106 hypertensive patients, 750 mg of steviosides significantly reduced systolic and diastolic blood pressure after three months of treatment with no adverse events noted. Use stevia instead of sugar. Some people have reported that white stevia doesn't have the bitter aftertaste regular stevia does. Look for Stevia Plus Fiber at Whole Foods Markets and other health food stores.

Tocotrienols are a special form of vitamin E that help strengthen capillary walls and inhibit free-radical formation. The recommended dose is 25–50 mg of tocotrienols daily. Twinlab MaxiLife Rice Tocotrienols is a good product, available at health food stores. An excellent full-spectrum vitamin E product is Tocotrienols with Vitamin E by Allergy Research, available from Gaines Nutrition (800-830-7139 or www.gaines.com).

Trimethylglycine (TMG), a naturally occurring amino acid, helps reduce the production of homocysteine, a compound that irritates the walls of arteries and causes blood to become thick and sticky. The recommended dose is 400 mg daily. I like TMG products by Jarrow and Source Naturals.

Immune Health

When your body's immune system is under attack, the consequences may be dire. Your immune system is under fire from antibiotic-resistant bacteria and genetically modified fruits and vegetables bathed in fertilizers and toxic pesticides. Compound that with fast food, frozen dinners, and nutrient-deficient vegetables from depleted soil, and it's no wonder that most people have immune systems that are crashing!

Hydrotherapy is a fancy term for alternating hot and cold water as you shower or bathe. It's a simple way to tone your blood vessels, fortify your body against viruses and bacteria, increase your body's ability to rid itself of toxins, and activate a healing immune response. Start with one minute of warm water (as hot as you can safely stand) and then quickly switch to cold (as cold as you can stand) for 45 seconds. Repeat this two or three times.

Vitamin C helps the body make immune-boosting glutathione, strengthens white blood cells, and aids in the cleanup of toxic debris. It is water soluble and safe, yet potent and inexpensive. I recommend 1,000 mg, three times daily for prevention, and 1,000–2,000 mg four to six times per day when you're fighting a cold or flu. Most brands sell a simple ascorbic acid. If it agrees with your stomach, great! It's the cheapest and most abundant form. Personally, I need a buffered vitamin C product to prevent getting a sour stomach. I use Life Extension buffered vitamin C powder or Now Foods calcium ascorbate, both available at health food stores.

Garlic is a nutrient I've recommended already for promoting balanced cholesterol levels and protecting against hypertension. It is also an excellent all-around immune system enhancer. It is so effective that I believe it may even prevent the need for antibiotics. It is also a capable antidote to viruses, fungi, yeast, and parasites. Garlic is even effective against the drug-resistant bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus*. All this, and it tastes so good that it's a regular part of healthy diets across the globe. I recommend eating 1–2 cloves of fresh garlic daily. As for supplements, I like Garlinase 4000 by Enzymatic Therapy or Wellness GarliCell from Source Naturals. Look for them in health food stores.

Aloe vera is a time-tested wound healer—both internally and externally—because of its anti-inflammatory properties. In addition to speeding up healing, *Aloe vera* fights virus and infection by boosting the immune system, thereby reducing the need for your inflammatory system's emergency reactions. When choosing an aloe product, look for

How to Get the Most From Supplements

Supplementation is an excellent strategy for maintaining life-long health and vitality. Here are nine tips to make sure you're purchasing the best, purest, and most effective nutrients available:

1. **Identify quality manufacturers and rely on their products.** Look for manufacturers who have been around for a while, whose products are not showing up on recall lists or FDA hit lists, and who have been leaders in introducing breakthrough products. Seven manufacturers I trust every time are Enzymatic Therapy, Jarrow, Naturally Vitamins, Nature's Way, Prevail, Source Naturals, and Zand.
2. **Review lab analyses.** Many of the more reputable companies have independent quality control testing and will provide you with the results. Better companies have toll-free numbers and unconditional guarantees, and are willing to provide additional information on a product. If you can't reach a company, don't use their products.
3. **Use my label decoder and watch out for unhealthy fillers.** Look at the fine print on labels. Look for "other ingredients" or excipients. Every supplement will contain some necessary excipients, but if you see fillers such as propylene glycol, magnesium stearate (unless vegetable), artificial colors and sweeteners, sucralose, or talc, put it back on the shelf.
4. **Look for mineral chelates.** Check the minerals to see if they have been chelated or attached to an amino acid carrier. For example, in magnesium glycinate, glycinate is the amino acid group. The label may also note "amino acid chelate."
5. **Use the proper dosage for optimal outcome.** Quality supplements will offer clinically researched dosage levels. Resources such as www.herbalgram.org, www.pubmed.org, your local library, and my newsletter, *Naturally Well Today*, can help you identify optimum dosages.
6. **Duplicate the form of nutrient used in research.** Know what species and what part of a plant were used in a study, and look for those forms in supplements. For example, did the researchers use dried herb, dry leaves, extract, concentrated extract, or standardized extract? Many products do not contain the most effective nutrient forms.
7. **Purchase supplements in their most bio-available form.** If the nutrients are inaccessible to your system, they're useless.
8. **Make product decisions based on quality and science, not price.** The most effective supplements are not necessarily the most expensive, but they aren't likely to be the cheapest either.
9. **Pay attention to manufacturers' instructions.** Directions, such as how to store the nutrient, expiration date, and interaction warnings will all influence the efficacy of the supplement.

one with Active Aloe. Lily of the Desert is a good brand. It's available from the Vitamin Shoppe (800-223-1216 or www.vitaminshoppe.com).

Probiotics are the foundation of a healthy immune system. Your intestinal tract must function at peak performance in order for the rest of your immune system to do its job. A first-rate

probiotic delivers friendly, live beneficial bacteria to your gastrointestinal tract. Look for a product that contains lactobacillus (*L. acidophilus* and *L. bulgaricus*) and bifidobacteria (*B. longum* and *B. bifidum*). Bio-K Plus from Bio-K Plus International (www.biokplus.com) and Acidophilus Pearls from Enzymatic Therapy (available in health food stores) are two reliable choices.

Memory

Mild cognitive impairment is taken for granted as part of aging. It shouldn't be. There are a number of steps you can take to keep your brain sharp and your memory dependable. Synthetic medications play a significant role in fogging your brain and blunting memory, so beware of over-the-counter and prescription drugs and their role in your cognitive health. There are several combination supplements designed to increase mental acuity that I highly recommend:

Procera-AVH is a combination product developed by Josh Reynolds, a respected brain research expert and inventor. It includes the best, proven brain enhancers—including acetyl-L-carnitine, vinpocetine, and huperzine—to help boost your brain energy metabolism and blood flow. I find it helps me to think quickly, stay focused and keep a clear memory. Take 2 tablets in the morning with breakfast and 2 with lunch. Don't take at night, unless you plan on burning the midnight oil. You can purchase it online at www.2020brainpower.com.

Other winning combination formulas to consider are **ThinkFast** and **Smart Advantage**. **ThinkFast** by Futurebiotics contains a patented memory enhancer called CogninSA, made from ancient Chinese herbs. Take 1–2 ThinkFast capsules, twice a day with food. You can find it at health food stores or online at www.mothernature.com. **Smart Advantage** includes pyroglutamate, a proven smart nutrient that can help revive a tired brain. Take 1–4 capsules of Smart Advantage a day in divided doses. It's available online from Health Freedom Nutrition at www.hfn-usa.com.

Individual ingredients that can make your brain fuzz-free and your memory fail-safe include the following:

Phosphatidyl choline helps maintain brain cell health and provides a fundamental building block for basic nerve health and function by supplementing acetylcholine synthesis. PhosChol 900 from American Lecithin Co. contains the highest potency phosphatidyl choline. If you can't find PhosChol 900 in health food stores, one online source is www.healingedge.net.

Ginkgo, an extensively studied herb, increases both blood flow to the brain and metabolic activity, and helps stabilize neural decline. Take 40 mg of a standardized extract three times per day. I like Nature's Way Ginkgold, available in health food stores.

Alpha-glycerylphosphorylcholine (Alpha-GPC) is a naturally occurring phospholipid derived from lecithin. It's a building block of nerve cell membranes and is a readily available source of choline, which supports normal memory and cognitive functions. I recommend Alpha GPC from the Life Extension Foundation (800-544-4440 or www.lef.org) and Alpha GPC 300 by Jarrow, which is available in health food stores.

Phosphatidylserine is a major cellular component of nerve tissue that aids in brain energy release and the activity of critical neurotransmitters. It improves learning and memory, especially of things like names, faces, and places (such as where you left your keys). Research shows that phosphatidylserine can slow and even reverse the age-related decline of memory, learning and concentration. Take 100 mg one to four times per day. Source Naturals is a good brand.

Acetyl-L-carnitine supports brain energy production by facilitating fuel delivery into the mitochondria of your cells. Take 250–500 mg one to three times daily. I like acetyl-L-carnitine by Jarrow and Source Naturals.

Menopause

Menopause is a time of transition. It's a rite of passage that gives a woman the opportunity to redefine herself and her priorities. It is not a time of life that mandates the use of unnatural or dangerous pharmaceuticals. Here are some natural therapies I recommend for treating menopausal symptoms.

Black cohosh. I've recommended this herb for years. In studies, its compounds have been shown to manage the major symptoms of menopause effectively. My first choice is Bionorica's Klimadynon (800-264-2325 or www.bionoricausa.com) with Remefemin by Enzymatic Therapy a close

second. To find a store that carries Remefemin, call 800-783-2286 or go online to www.enzy.com. Take these products as directed and give either one several months for full symptom relief.

Special safety note: There has been recent concern about the use of black cohosh and possible liver disease. As with all nutritional therapies, you should educate yourself about the quality and effectiveness of any product before using it. All black cohosh is not the same. Some may contain wrong or ineffective species, while others can contain improper plant parts. Use only the highest quality products to get results and not regrets.

Gamma oryzanol, an extract from rice bran oil, can be quite effective for easing menopausal symptoms. This under-appreciated extract is especially useful for symptoms having to do with the autonomic nervous system, including night sweats and heart palpitations. Source Naturals has an herbal combination called Gamma Oryzanol. Take two 60-mg tablets three times a day with meals. If you're not satisfied with the results, double your dose. It's completely safe, so don't worry about overdoing it.

Chaste tree berry is a centuries-old remedy whose benefits stem from its effect on the pituitary gland. It was once thought that the effect was due to increased progesterone production in the ovaries. New research, though, shows that the effect is more likely due to an increase in dopamine production. It is especially helpful for women entering early (peri) menopause. I highly recommend Cyclodynon (BNO 1095 Special Extract) from Bionorica (800-264-2325 or www.bionoricausa.com) or Femaprin (Vitex) by Nature's Way, which can be purchased from www.VitaminLife.com (866-998-8855). Take either as directed for three months to experience results.

Borage oil and **black currant oil** are excellent alternatives to the more expensive evening primrose oil. Both contain high levels of gamma linolenic acid (GLA), an essential fatty acid not manufactured by the body. GLA regulates the anti-inflammatory prostaglandins (cellular hormones). I recommend 1 tablespoon of oil once or twice a

day. Omega Nutrition, Barlean's, and Spectrum all make good organic borage and black currant oils.

Neptune krill oil (NKO). Krill (*Euphausia superba*) is a crustacean that swims in the waters off Antarctica. Because it is so abundant, it is the primary food of whales. The antioxidants in krill oil have been shown to be up to 550 times more powerful than vitamin E and 300 times more powerful than vitamin A. NKO has been shown to relieve menstrual discomforts. Look for NKO by Jarrow or Source Naturals.

Prostate Health

The prostate is a walnut-sized, doughnut-shaped gland, tucked deep in the lower abdomen. It is located under the bladder, and encircles the upper part of the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the penis). Although we still have much to learn about this tiny gland's function, we do know that it makes fluid for semen, the transport medium for sperm in male ejaculate. And, it's responsible for much of the pleasure men experience with orgasm. Just prior to orgasm, the powerful muscular contractions of the prostate squeeze fluid into the urethra, where it is joined by sperm from the testicles. The mixture of semen, sperm, and prostatic fluids is then propelled down the urethra and out of the penis during sexual climax, all courtesy of the prostate.

As Western men age, the prostate often increases in size (this is not generally seen in cultures outside North America and Europe). The prostate begins to enlarge through a process of cellular multiplication in up to half of all men in their 40s. It's estimated that by age 60, more than half of all men have an enlarged prostate and, with time, up to 90 percent will eventually develop enlarged prostates, with approximately 50 percent developing symptoms.

An enlarged prostate, medically known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), is one of the most common health problems affecting men. When the prostate enlarges, its tough capsule keeps it from expanding outward, so it may pinch

off the urethra running through it, impeding or, worst case, blocking urine flow.

Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) is the most successful and well-researched medicinal plant for BPH. It works to inhibit the action of the 5-alpha reductase enzyme. It has been the subject of dozens of clinical trials, almost all conducted in Europe. An extract of saw palmetto berries has been shown to be at least as effective as the drug in treating BPH symptoms, while achieving results faster, and with 90 percent fewer unwelcome side effects, such as loss of libido and impotence. And there's a major bonus: One of the properties that makes saw palmetto effective at treating prostate enlargement may also prevent the development of prostate cancer.

Be sure to use a saw palmetto berry extract that is standardized to 85 to 95 percent fatty acids and sterols. This is the most researched form and the one shown to significantly improve urine flow, decrease residual urine by 50 percent, and lower the frequency of nocturia. I recommend Saw Palmetto Complex by Enzymatic Therapy or Ultra Saw Palmetto and Pygeum by Jarrow Formulas.

Beta sitosterol is another long-time European favorite for prostate health. Beta sitosterol is one of several plant sterols or fats. Although similar in structure to cholesterol, plant sterols have none of cholesterol's unfavorable aspects and many beneficial ones. For instance, it helps reduce inflammation and boost the immune system. The most popular beta sitosterol product in Germany is Harzol, which contains 30 mg of the substance. Another European product is Azuprostal with 120 mg per dose. Unfortunately, both are expensive and difficult to get in the US. Of those available here, I recommend Beta Prostate by NAC Vitamins (800-943-6465 or www.newvitality.com). Take two to three times per day for best results.

Stress Management

L-theanine, an amino acid found almost exclusively in tea, may be the reason that tea isn't as stimulating as other caffeinated beverages. Two small human studies have shown that 30 to 40

minutes after ingestion of a minimum of 50 mg L-theanine, there is an increase in brain alpha-wave activity, electrical signals produced by the brain during sleep. This activity leaves a person feeling relaxed, yet alert, which can help manage the effects of stress better. I trust *Fatigued to Fantastic Revitalizing Sleep Formula* by Enzymatic Therapy and Theanine 100 by Jarrow Formulas.

Lactium is a natural milk peptide that I recommend for addressing stress or anxiety. It makes you feel calm and clear rather than drowsy and foggy (the way drugs can). Effects can be felt within an hour, but a few days of use are needed to fully appreciate its benefits. A source is *De-Stress from Biotics Research* (800-231-5777 or www.BioticsResearch.com).

GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) is an amino acid that functions as a neurotransmitter. Ideally, your brain produces all the GABA you need. Unfortunately, due to stress, poor diet, exposure to environmental toxins, or other factors, GABA production and levels may become depleted. GABA has been largely overlooked despite its central role in brain biochemistry because of the belief that GABA does not cross the blood-brain barrier and is therefore not effective. However, almost all of the GABA used in research is synthetic. Completely natural GABA is highly effective. It's made in Japan and is now available from sources in Canada—and it should be available from US sources in 2007. Research has shown that this natural GABA formulation promotes relaxation and sleep, reduces anxiety, and eases mild stress.

At this time, I recommend only the natural GABA made by Quest Vitamins, which is available from Nutrition Plus (www.NutPlus.com or 877-269-5954). Take 1–2 capsules a day between meals until you become familiar with your response to it, then increase to 1–2 capsules 2–3 times a day. You should feel calm without being tired and focused without feeling sluggish. Individual responses to GABA can vary, so ease into it, especially if you're currently taking an anti-depressant. GABA is highly safe and non-toxic. In fact, I've prescribed mega-dosing of gram quantities five to six times a

day without any signs of sedation while achieving improved mental clarity, focus, and functioning—so proceed confidently.

Vision

We put our eyes through grueling tasks, including technology-induced wear and tear and exposure to air pollution and solar radiation. We rub them to “relieve” tiredness, and douse them with chemicals “marketed” to relieve redness and relax them. But while some loss of visual acuity is a normal result of aging, that doesn’t mean you should simply accept it. The first step toward healthy vision—and optimal health in general—is a broad-spectrum antioxidant. Here are some additional supplements that support eye health:

Astaxanthin is a naturally occurring carotenoid pigment that is responsible for the characteristic pink color of salmon and crustacean shells. Preliminary animal research suggests astaxanthin is a powerful antioxidant that passes through the blood-brain barrier, making it available to the brain and central nervous system to alleviate oxidative stress. One study indicates astaxanthin is effective at ameliorating retinal injury and is effective at protecting photoreceptors from degeneration. I like Astaxanthin by Source Naturals, available in health food stores. Take 4 mg daily.

Bilberry is a European relative of the blueberry. Its flavonoids improve circulation,

strengthen collagen, discourage inflammation in eye tissues, and neutralize free radicals in the retina. I recommend a daily dose of 320 mg of a bilberry extract standardized to contain 25 percent anthocyanidins. Try Jarrow Formula’s Bilberry + Grapeskin Polyphenols or Enzymatic Therapy’s Bilberry Extract Eye Health Ultracaps. They are available at a variety of health food stores and online health product sites.

Lutein is a carotenoid found in high concentrations in the eyes. This is the same antioxidant carotenoid found in abundance in some fruits and vegetables. If you eat a large spinach salad every day, you’ll probably get enough lutein. But if you don’t, you’ll want to take a lutein supplement to protect your sight. You can find lutein at health food stores.

★ ★ ★

There you have it...my top recommendations on vitamin values...plus a whole lot more. Use this special report to guide your first steps toward better, pain-free health, achieved naturally. I look forward to helping and guiding you in the months to come.

To Your Good Health,



Dr. Marcus Laux

Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

The Amazing New "Marmalade Cure" for Arthritis

IN THIS SPECIAL REPORT

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Chances are you or someone you know has osteoarthritis.

Also known as degenerative joint disease, osteoarthritis affects more than 40 million Americans,

and many more women than men. While most people do not suffer from the pain of osteoarthritis until after 50, it affects more than 85 percent of the population after age 70.

If you have arthritis and have been to a conventional medical practitioner, you might be reading this with a skeptical eye. You may have been told that arthritis is incurable, a result of age or genetics, and that you simply have to learn to live with its symptoms. You may even have been warned against any alternative therapies that claim to solve your problem. Well, millions upon millions of people have lived painful, disabled, even crippled lives because of such misconceptions. You don't have to be one of them.

There are two primary types of osteoarthritis. The first does not stem from an injury or specific condition and is generally age-related. It is caused by the gradual wear and tear on cartilage that comes about simply from daily life. The second is due to injury or disease and can show up at any time. A car accident, an old football injury—they may heal beautifully at the time, but suddenly

cause joint problems later on. There are many other factors that cause, or lead to, the aches and pains of arthritis.

In this report I'll talk about some of them and what you can do to counteract their deleterious effects. I'll also reveal other therapies that can help eliminate arthritic symptoms, including an exciting new discovery that involves—believe it or not—marmalade! But first, you need to understand your skeletal system and how it works.

How Your Skeletal System Works

Your skeleton contains 206 bones, held together by roughly 150 joints and surrounded by muscle and connective tissue. An engineering miracle, bones, joints, and muscles not only support up to hundreds of pounds every day, they also perform thousands of acts that require strength and flexibility.

BONES

Bones are made up of living, growing, dynamic tissue. Cut one in half and you'll find a core of spongy tissue containing marrow. Marrow is surrounded by layers of bone tissue (primarily phosphates of calcium, held together by collagen and other proteins) that give bones their strength and flexibility. The outer layer of bone is hard and dense, and is covered by a hardy membrane called the periosteum.

CARTILAGE

At the very ends of adjoining bones, there is a tough, cushioning substance called joint or articular *cartilage*. If you've ever chewed on a chicken drumstick, you'll know what it is—a smooth, slick, resilient covering that allows bones to glide over one another inside the joint capsule (Teflon has nothing on this cartilage). Cartilage is made up of 85 percent water, cartilage cells (chondrocytes), and two different protein-sugar molecules: collagen and proteoglycans.

The purpose of chondrocytes is to break down old or damaged cartilage and replace it with new. All cells need a fresh supply of water, oxygen, nutrients, essential fatty acids, antioxidants, vitamins, amino acids, and trace minerals to function properly and thrive. In addition, chondrocytes need specialized nutrients that encourage and allow the repair and replacement of old or damaged cartilage. Unfortunately, cell regeneration takes a great deal of time and, as we age, degeneration of our cartilage is a lot more efficient than regeneration.

Collagen is made up of chains of cable-like amino acids and special modified sugars. Together they provide a great deal of structural integrity, creating a kind of net that both strengthens and supports your cartilage. Proteoglycans, the other protein-sugar molecule in cartilage, fill up the spaces left by the collagen net. They attract and hold water in cartilage and provide it with more “give and take” to absorb and cushion all your daily movements.

JOINTS AND JOINT CAPSULES

Bones and cartilage are held together by a durable fibrous membrane called the joint capsule, held in place by ligaments that attach bone to bone. Outside the joint capsule, tough cord-like fibers called tendons connect muscles to bones. The contraction of muscles pulls on tendons, moving bones and joints.

Most of the bones in your body are connected by free-moving or synovial joints. A clear, thick, lubricating synovial fluid is produced by the synovial sac or inner walls of the joint capsule. It creates a slippery protective environment in which the joint can operate. The bursa, just outside the joint, also provides lubrication to ensure ease of movement.

Joints can form hinges (fingers, toes, elbows, and knees), a ball-and-socket (hips and shoulders), a saddle (wrists and thumbs), or a gliding surface (vertebrae). These synovial joints are the joints most prone to arthritis.

How It Breaks Down

The amazing engineering described above is what lets you knead dough, pick up a baby, make the bed, play cards, run, dance, and go for a walk. However, all that movement over the years eventually wears down cartilage and impedes its ability to move smoothly within the joint capsule, which is when osteoarthritis can set in.

While your body can regenerate cartilage (some doctors still remain unaware that it can do this at all!), its ability to do so declines with age. Eventually, you may be left with almost complete bone-on-bone contact within the joint capsule, and that just plain hurts. Pain, swelling, stiffness, and creaky joints—it all comes with the territory. Here are some other culprits to consider.

REPETITIVE STRESS INJURIES

Ballet dancers, football players, typists, boxers, seamstresses—all may be more prone to arthritis from repetitive stress injuries. Even if what you're doing doesn't hurt at the time, if you do it often enough, it can make you pay later. Constant stress to a particular joint weakens the infrastructure of your cartilage until your body can no longer replenish cartilage or compensate for the damage. Inflammation from the chronic micro-trauma of repetitive stress wears down cartilage the same way water wears down rock—slowly and steadily.

DIET

Certain foods can also cause pain and inflammation for some people. To minimize food triggers for inflammation, avoid processed and canned foods; white-flour foods such as crackers, white rice, white bread, and white pasta; fried foods; sugar; and caffeine. (Since a food allergy could be triggering your arthritis symptoms, you may want to refer to the list of likely culprits under “Food Allergies,” on the next page.) Avoid hydrogenated or processed oils, including those found in margarine, peanut butter, and potato chips. Today’s food contains too few of the omega-3 and omega-9, and too many of the omega-6 fats.

WEIGHT

Your joints have to support your weight. It stands to reason that obesity puts more demands on joints. A study at the Boston University Arthritis Center has shown that overweight women are significantly more likely to become arthritic in the knees than normal-weight women.

ANTIBIOTICS

Broad-spectrum antibiotics have historically been recommended primarily for rheumatoid arthritis, but also for some cases of osteoarthritis. They can be useful in reducing inflammation by getting rid of pockets of infection. However, multiple use of antibiotics is one of the triggers for arthritis—and other problems that lead to arthritis. Antibiotics can also rid your body of friendly flora in your intestines. When that happens, microorganisms that normally coexist quite peacefully in the body—such as *Candida albicans* (the culprit behind yeast infections)—can start to overgrow and cause trouble. And that, in turn, can lead to arthritis symptoms.

CANDIDIASIS

An imbalance of *Candida albicans* creates yeast or fungal infections, usually inside the

intestines, mouth, and vagina. This imbalance can result from antibiotics, hormones such as cortisone or birth control pills, and other chemicals—or simply from chronic exposure to stress and poor eating habits.

One byproduct produced by candidiasis is acetaldehyde, a metabolite of alcohol that passes through your digestive tract and ends up in—and severely stresses—every organ and body system. The result of this chemical stress can mimic either rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, or any one of the autoimmune disorders that can also create painful joints.

Candidiasis, however, doesn’t produce only acetaldehyde. It also results in tiny particles of undigested food and other undesirable foreign matter that can enter the bloodstream. This, in turn, sets up the beginning of an immune reaction, in this case a food allergy.

LEAKY GUT SYNDROME

If your intestines are too permeable (think of a sieve where the holes are a bit too large to do the job you need done), undigested food, nutrients, parasites, and bacteria can get into your bloodstream where they are attacked by your immune system. Your immune system forms antibodies that attach to these “foreign bodies,” and form immune complexes. These complexes can become lodged in your joints; and your immune system, still trying to kill the cause of these complexes, ends up destroying joint tissue in the process.

In addition, bits of undigested foods and foreign substances can be the basis for a food allergy or autoimmunity, which can cause joint pain and inflammation. A doctor-friend of mine made the astute observation that this whole process forces the immune system to literally step up to the plate and finish the job of digestion.

Inflammation and Arthritis

Both athletes and non-athletes get arthritis. Why? One reason is chronic, low-level inflammation. As we age, we don't self-regulate our body processes as well as we did in our youth. In addition to free-radical damage, inflammation is caused by injury, infection, exposure to toxins, viruses, bacteria, high sugar intake, or an unbalanced ratio of "bad" fats to "good" fats. In short, if you've lived a few decades, you've been exposed to the effects of inflammation. In essence, there's been a slow simmer going on in your body for a long time, and it can etch and destroy your cartilage.

Under normal circumstances, inflammation is a necessary component of our lives. Cut your finger while opening a can, and your body protects it by sending immune cells and inflammatory agents to begin the healing process. As you heal, the inflammation subsides, leaving a fully healed scar behind it. However, over time, and due to some lifestyle choices, your body can become chronically inflamed. The inflammatory process no longer subsides after the initial threat is past. Instead of tissue repair, this "inflammation cascade" leads to tissue damage. It's like a constant low-grade fire burning, and it produces a slew of white blood cells, clotting factors, extended free-radical activity, and other substances, that eventually make their way into your bloodstream.

Inflammation also results in decreased nutrient absorption, congested blood flow, heart attacks, strokes, and a huge variety of other conditions. While inflammation has been linked to heart disease, most conventional and alternative practitioners have only scratched the surface of this condition, which I believe may be the cause for a great many illnesses.

FOOD ALLERGIES

The number of food allergies you have may increase with age. Eat a particular food and you

may get hives immediately, or a headache, or an upset stomach. You may suddenly feel tired. Or your joints may hurt. Or, you may eat a particular food and feel completely fine—until anytime up to a week later, when you get a headache, upset stomach, fatigue, or joint pain—and have no idea where it came from. You might even blame something you just ate, which in this case would not be the culprit.

If you suspect you may have food allergies, talk to a qualified doctor about getting allergy tests; or you can try a food-elimination diet. Every two weeks choose one food from the group below and avoid it completely for 14 days. Pay attention to how you feel once you eliminate the food. You may even want to keep a journal during this time to help put the pieces together. Slowly reintroduce a smaller, more modest amount of the food, and track how you feel. If you see an emerging pattern, you'll have a better idea of what to avoid.

You could be allergic to literally any food under the sun. The most common food allergens include dairy, wheat, peanuts, eggs, red meat, and fried foods. Rheumatoid and osteoarthritis sufferers, in particular, are prone to have a bad reaction to white potatoes, eggplant, tomatoes, and peppers, as well as brewer's and baker's yeast, corn, and eggs. If you think you may have a food allergy, you might start by eliminating these potential offenders.

HORMONE DEFICIENCY

As you saw with *Candida albicans*—the microorganism that resides in most of us quite happily until something triggers its overgrowth—much of what goes wrong with our bodies occurs when something is out of balance. Hormones are no exception.

Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) is a precursor to testosterone, estrogen, and other sex hormones. DHEA levels decrease naturally with age, eventually reaching a point where its insufficiency can trigger the onset of several diseases that lead to joint pain.

Low thyroid levels result in a slower metabolism, which in turn leads to fatigue and susceptibility to disease. It also lessens your natural ability to repair problems in your body, such as eroding cartilage.

Low estrogen and progesterone levels, common to menopause, are tied to arthritis, as is a low level of testosterone in men.

Heal Your Joints—Naturally

As I said at the beginning, you don't have to live with the pain and suffering of arthritis. In addition to addressing any of the culprits above that may apply to you, there are other things you can do to naturally ease your symptoms.

THE AMAZING EFFECTS OF MARMALADE

By now, I'm guessing you've heard of—and may even have tried using—glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate. Many conventional doctors even recommend them for their patients. Why? They actually improve joint health without the potentially lethal side effects associated with anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and COX-2 inhibitors. I also recommend glucosamine and chondroitin for joint health, and I'll give you more details on them in a moment. But first, I want to tell you about an exciting breakthrough discovery that appears to be even more effective at supporting healthy joints and eliminating pain.

This discovery all started when a Scandinavian farmer with agonizing osteoarthritis started eating jam. It was a traditional delicacy called rose hip marmalade made from special roses that grow along the Danish beaches. When the farmer noticed his joint pain easing, he realized it was related to his marmalade consumption and he figured it was the rose hip ingredient that made the miraculous difference. After sharing his experience with friends and family, he brought the rose hip solution to his local doctor. From there it was written up in

Scandinavian medical journals and tested extensively in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

Danish rose hip powder has been studied in 13 different clinical trials and results indicate that it is effective at reducing the pain and inflammation of osteoarthritis and can also help block the autoimmune reactions that trigger rheumatoid arthritis. In fact, over 82 percent of the study participants reported that the powder was effective in reducing their joint pain. This is truly astounding when glucosamine—generally considered the nutritional supplement “gold standard” for promoting joint health—is only effective for 40 percent of arthritis patients.

What glucosamine can't do—and what Danish rose hip powder can—is help to halt the inflammation that causes so much arthritis pain. And it doesn't stop there. Clinical trials also indicate that Danish rose hip powder can improve joint mobility. Patients using it reported less joint stiffness and more fluid movement than they had before they started taking the powder.

Another important aspect of Danish rose hip powder is that its anti-inflammatory action can promote your overall good health and help protect you from other health conditions. Specifically, human trials of the powder showed that it dramatically lowered levels of C-reactive protein, one of the main risk factors implicated in cardiovascular problems.

Equally important is what Danish rose hip powder doesn't do. It doesn't have dangerous side effects associated with conventional pain medications. And, unlike NSAIDs and aspirin, it doesn't interfere with the body's blood clotting mechanisms.

Although there are a number of rose hip powder formulas on the market, the only one I recommend is LitoZin by Hyben Vital. This particular formula is the one used in the clinical trials I mentioned. LitoZin uses a special species of rose hip powder,

which contains an extremely high content of galactolipid compound (GOPO). GOPO has proven to be the active anti-inflammatory element in rose hip powder. Furthermore, the company uses a proprietary drying process to ensure that the GOPO is present and active in the finished product. You can order LitoZin Standard Danish Langeland Rose Hips through Swanson Health Products (800-824-4491 or www.swansonvitamins.com).

GLUCOSAMINE SULFATE AND LOW-MOLECULAR-WEIGHT CHONDROITIN SULFATE ARE STILL IMPORTANT

Even though it appears that Danish rose hip powder may be more effective at eliminating arthritic symptoms, your body actually produces glucosamine (it is found in synovial fluid). That is why I believe it is still a valuable weapon in your arsenal against joint pain. Glucosamine is also one of the building blocks of proteoglycans, which, as I mentioned earlier, are a vital part of your cartilage. It is also needed to lubricate and protect your joints. Glucosamine also reduces synovial joint inflammation, stimulates the growth of new cartilage cells, reduces proteoglycan breakdown, and helps rebuild damaged cartilage.

Chondroitin sulfate is another important nutrient for joint health because it supports the strength and resiliency of your cartilage and encourages the production of proteoglycans. However, it is not easily absorbed into the body. That is why I recommend low-molecular-weight chondroitin sulfate because research shows that it has a much higher absorption rate, which means it can get into your bloodstream and joints where it can really help.

I recommend 1,500 mg of glucosamine sulfate and 1,200 mg of chondroitin sulfate daily. (By the way, researchers have found that 1,500 mg of glucosamine can be taken once a day, instead of 500 mg three times per day.) Glucosamine-chondroitin products I like are GS-500 and

Chondroitin by Enzymatic Therapy, which combines glucosamine sulfate with low-molecular-weight, marine-source chondroitin sulfate, or MaxiLIFE Glucosamine/Chondroitin Sulfate by Twinlab. Both are available in health food stores.

THE POWER OF MSM

Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM) is a naturally occurring compound found in some foods—primarily fruits, vegetables, meat, milk, and seafood—human blood, and tissues. It has been shown to relieve arthritic and other types of musculoskeletal pain. MSM can only be purified by crystallization and distillation. Distillation uses heat to separate pure MSM from impurities. At a boiling point of 478 degrees F, pure MSM can completely separate from the solution, producing the purest MSM available. In the crystallization process, the purity of MSM is largely dependent on the quality of raw materials and on manufacturing procedure. Some manufacturers use crystallization because it's cheaper, but the industry prefers distillation.

Bergstrom Nutrition (formerly Cardinal Nutrition), a pioneer in MSM technology, produces one of the purest forms available. This company adheres to the highest quality control standards and has always used distillation to purify its MSM product. Bergstrom Nutrition has been highly active in initiating clinical research on MSM and their product, OptiMSM, is the only MSM product I recommend. It is available in many health food stores. For more information, visit www.bergstromnutrition.com.

HERBAL PAIN RELIEVERS

Lubriflex is a product that contains a proprietary blend of two Chinese herbal extracts, acacia and Chinese skullcap. A recent human study showed that the combination of these two herbs targeted 5-LO, a little-known enzyme highly involved with inflammation and the pain that accompanies it. The combination also worked on the better-known COX-2 enzyme, but without the

side effects of COX-2-inhibiting drugs. The dosage used in the study was 250 mg, twice daily, which is what you'll find in Lubriflex. You can purchase it through Swanson Health Products (800-824-4491 or www.swansonvitamins.com).

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) and hops flower extract (*Humulus lupulus*) combined have been shown to relieve osteoarthritis pain in clinical studies. The two herbs work by inhibiting pain-producing COX-2 enzymes but—like Lubriflex—without the alarming potential side effects of drugs. Enzymatic Therapy's FlexAgility MAX offers both herbs in a proprietary blend. It is available in health food stores. Take one softgel two times a day with meals.

CONTROLLED EXERCISE

Although it may come as a surprise, exercise is an important part of healing and maintaining your joints. Your exercise goal should be to find the right balance between mobility and pain. The more you move and exercise, the faster, better, more flexible, and more pain-free your daily movements should become. If exercise is painful, you need to persevere and you likely will find that you feel better at the end, particularly if you stretch afterward. Let your body guide you—if you are very stiff and in pain following a specific exercise,

you should back away from it or perform it less intensely. See if you can increase your endurance later on.

Controlled exercise, such as stretching, yoga, T'ai Chi, and Qigong, will greatly increase your range of motion and flexibility, likely without injuring you in the process. Each of these exercise disciplines has a wide range of levels of mastery that you can take on at your own speed. Even 15 to 20 minutes a day can work wonders.

Yours in Good Health,



Dr. Marcus Laux

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Life is extraordinary, and digestion typifies its amazing nature. We eat something that comes from the ground, maybe from the other side of the world, and assume it will become a part of us. Not only to merge its cellular contents into ours, but to strengthen, energize, and nourish us.

You've seen what happens to a tree when its root

system is starved for nutrients. The blooms fade, the leaves shrivel up and begin to fall off, the limbs become brittle or droop, and the whole tree withers. Think of digestion as the root to your tree of life—the system that takes hold of all the nutrients from soil, sun, water, and air; breaks them down; and makes them available for use by the rest of your body. When your digestive function suffers, you open the door to nutritional deficiencies, food and environmental allergies, parasites, increased absorption of toxins, poor immune function, inflammation, fatigue, and all manner of chronic, degenerative diseases.

Establishing Healthy Digestion

Have you ever heard that old adage, trust your gut? You can take this literally. Digestion—the process of separating the pure from the impure and absorbing life's necessities—is so important that it has been said that life and death often start in your colon. The digestive system contains an integral network of nerves, blood vessels, and even “brain chemicals.” (Many neurotransmitters found in your brain are also in your gut.) If your gut tells you something's amiss,

it's probably time to give your gastrointestinal (GI) tract a little TLC.

Healthy digestion and absorption begin with attention to how, when, and what you eat. You think about food, and saliva begins to form. As you chew your food, amylase, a digestive enzyme, is secreted and immediately begins to break down carbohydrates. The way in which you begin a meal, how you eat, when you eat, and what you eat, will set the stage for how your body will digest the food you eat.

How:

- ▶ **Chew your food well.** Chewing food is a superior “treatment” for improving digestion and absorption. Chewing breaks down food mechanically and chemically. The more that food is broken down in your mouth, the less work your stomach, bowels, and digestive helpers have to do. Chewing improves digestive efficiency and keeps your energy available for other functions. Chewing well also gives your body time to feel satisfied with the nutrition you've provided, so you're less likely to overeat.
- ▶ **Avoid overeating.** Digesting large amounts of food burdens your body unnecessarily. You should eat smaller portions of nutrient-dense, calorie-light foods. Portions of any one food should be no bigger than the size of your closed fist. Breathe deeply and relax at meal times. A good tip from mom: Put your fork down between each bite.
- ▶ **Test for food allergies.** Food allergies often result from an impaired digestive system. At the same time, they can aggravate digestive problems. To give your GI tract a break, try to identify any food triggers. Start with the most common: wheat, eggs, and dairy. Eliminate these foods one

at a time, avoiding each for about three weeks. Then reintroduce the food at one meal. See how you react over the next few days. If you identify a food as an allergy trigger, avoid it for a few months to give your body time to heal. Then reintroduce it slowly (once or twice a week, with two to three days in between).

WHEN:

- **Have regular mealtimes.** The body loves cycles, rhythms, and routines. The more regular your eating habits, the easier it is for your body to perform digestion, absorption, assimilation, and elimination.

To remain at peak health, limit late night eating. **No matter what your food choice, it still requires digestive energy that your system could be using instead to assimilate and repair.**

WHAT:

- **Consume nutrient-rich foods that will support your body.** Diets high in sugar, refined foods, processed foods, additives, and trans fats disrupt your digestive system and handicap every other body function. Real foods—that is whole, natural fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds—are calorie-appropriate and nutrient-intensive.
- **Choose a variety of whole, organic foods.** For good health, you need a variety of whole, natural complex carbohydrates, proteins, and fats—preferably organic. If you constantly eat the same few foods, you could be weakening your body systems by not keeping all your nutrient stores complete.
- **Protein is an important part of this variety and one that many Americans are deficient in.** Legumes, eggs, and any meats are great sources of protein. If you eat meat, try to purchase the grass-fed, hormone-free, or wild selections. They'll taste better, provide you with a broader spectrum of benefits, and won't overload your digestive system with foreign hormones and toxins.
- **Get plenty of fiber.** Fiber absorbs impurities and water, gets rid of poisons, cleanses your bowels, stimulates bowel movements, and reduces the amount of time that waste spends in your body. A healthy diet contains soluble fibers

Passing Gas, Belching, and Other Embarrassing Moments

Even healthy people have digestive complaints. Gas, bloating, diarrhea, constipation, spastic colon, belching, flatulence, food allergies, pain after eating, abdominal cramping, and indigestion can bother even the most proper person.

To treat common digestive problems naturally, try carminatives. Carminatives increase the secretion of stomach acids to help digestion, relaxing intestines, relieving trapped air, and allowing gas to be passed. A few carminatives to try include spearmint, anise, caraway, and coriander. Here are some others:

- **Fennel seeds** help reduce gas and prevent bloating after a rich meal. If you've ever been to an Indian restaurant, you might remember a little bowl of seeds by the door or brought to your table after the meal. They are fennel seeds, anise, and licorice. The Indian culture has known of the digestive soothing properties of fennel for centuries. To reduce gas, chew on two or three seeds immediately after your meal.
- **Peppermint tea** stimulates bile flow and promotes stomach secretions. To help digestion, drink a cup of peppermint tea 30 minutes before your meal.
- **German chamomile** flowers reduce inflammation and stomach spasms. Try a cup of chamomile tea between meals for soothing digestion.
- **Ginger root** is well known for its many digestive properties and is often used to soothe nausea. Fresh ginger root is tasty in cooking, as a tea, or as candied ginger.
- **Herbal bitters** are another European secret to a more pleasant dining experience. In most European restaurants (and in many in the US), you can get a small glass of herbal bitters to help digestion or relieve digestive distress. Two products that are available in the US are Enzymatic Therapy's Iberogast, and NatureWorks' Swedish Bitters.

from vegetables and fruits (pectins) and insoluble fiber from grains and seeds (bran).

- **Go raw.** Raw foods contain enzymes that may be missing in cooked or processed foods. Enzymes are as vital to good health as vitamins and other nutrients.

Keep Your System Flowing With Water

Almost every chemical reaction in your body takes place in water. In the digestive process, water dilutes poisons and provides a medium for elimination. For maximum benefits, drink water cool, neutral, or warm. If it's too cold, water can hinder digestion.

When you drink is also important to healthy digestion. It's best to sip a glass of water with your meals and save the majority of your water consumption for between meals throughout the day. **Too much water at mealtime can dilute hydrochloric acid and other digestive juices that are important to fully engage your digestive processes.** If you're over 40, this becomes increasingly important because, with age, enzyme production can decrease.

Supplement With Plant Enzymes

Enzymes in general are a life force that beats the heart, blinks the eyes, and causes your brain to think. In short, their specific activities make virtually all of life's processes happen. Unfortunately, while they are essential, they are an often-missing nutrient in too many peoples' food regimens.

Digestive enzymes are complex proteins that orchestrate the chemical breakdown reactions necessary for proper digestion and absorption. Without them, digestion doesn't happen.

There are three main enzyme groups involved in the digestive process: amylases, proteases, and lipases. Each group is highly specialized—engineered by nature to digest specific food groups and even specific types of foods within each of those food groups.

1. **Amylases** initiate the digestion of dietary starches (carbohydrates) and are found throughout the digestive process, starting with the salivary glands. Like other enzyme groups, amylases set off a chain reaction of enzymatic activity that eventually supports energy production.
2. **Proteases** break down proteins and are first encountered in the stomach. Proteins are further broken down by pancreatic enzymes in the small

Drugs That Endanger Digestion

According to the National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC), a number of medicines, though often safe when taken as directed, can have an adverse effect on the digestive system. Reactions range from mild to severe and include inhibiting the growth of friendly bacteria, interfering with stomach acid production, increasing the likelihood of reflux, increasing constipation, inducing diarrhea, inflaming the stomach lining, and causing ulcers. Here's a short list of culprits:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Antacids (both OTC and prescription) | ■ Calcium channel blockers (diltiazem, nifedipine, or verapamil) |
| ■ Antibiotics | ■ Colchicine |
| ■ Anticholinergics (levodopa and carbidopa/levodopa combination) | ■ Iron |
| ■ Antihypertensives (methyldopa and clonidine hydrochloride) | ■ Laxatives |
| ■ Bisphosphonates (Fosamax) | ■ Nitrates |
| | ■ Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (aspirin, ibuprofen, tolmetin, naproxen, and piroxicam) |

intestine, with a majority becoming amino acids and peptides, the building blocks of life.

3. **Lipases** break down fat. Along with bile salts, they also help the absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins, such as A, D, E, and K, and essential fatty acids.

PLANT OR ANIMAL ENZYMES—IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

You can improve your digestive fortitude by adding more of these digestive enzymes, specifically plant digestive enzymes, to your daily diet. Plant digestive enzymes are derived from fungal or botanical sources. A high-quality digestive enzyme product is able to survive a broad range of pH differences and provide a wide range of activity throughout the gastrointestinal tract. Animal digestive enzymes, while helpful in specific situations like pancreatic insufficiency and pancreatitis, have a much narrower

range of activity. Therefore, for most people, plant digestive enzymes are the supplement of choice.

I think of plant digestive enzymes as replacing digestive enzymes that are lost in cooking, canning, processing, or freezing. Supplementation saves your body from having to overwork to produce them. Once you start taking them, you're likely to notice an immediate difference. After a few months, you may feel your digestive system has improved or adequately recovered.

Take plant enzymes at the start of your meal, to more fully digest your food, increase your nutrient availability, and decrease exposure to potential antigens (partially digested food particles that can stimulate food allergies). On average, take one or two capsules with a snack and two to four capsules with your meal, depending on your needs. A good product will list a broad range of pH efficacy on the label. The enzymes will be measured in activity units rather than milligrams. Two products I like are Vitase Digestion Formula from Prevail or Enzymatic Therapy's CompleteGest.

Boosting Beneficial Bacteria— The Garden Within

The next step in healing and nurturing your "roots" is to boost the population of your good intestinal bacteria—the garden in your gut that does everything good for your body and absolutely nothing bad.

There are over 400 varieties of friendly organisms growing in the intestines. These good bacteria (or microflora) play a crucial role in proper digestion. They help neutralize toxins and inhibit the growth of bad bacteria, both of which can damage the gut and intestinal lining and weaken your immunity. They also make some vitamins and are integral parts of your immune system.

The two most common types of gut flora are *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidobacteria bifidus*. Lactobacilli are concentrated in the small intestine and produce lactase, an enzyme that breaks down milk sugars. Bifidobacteria reside in the large intestine and manufacture many of the B-complex vitamins. Both help protect the intestines from foreign invaders by supporting the proper pH of your internal environment.

Beneficial microflora are damaged by the use of antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals, stress,

refined foods, and too much alcohol. They also tend to decrease with age, which can lead to skin and joint problems, allergies, impaired digestive function, and a weakened immune system.

There are two things you can do to improve the health of your friendly microflora: Feed them and seed them.

FEED AND SEED YOUR FRIENDLY FLORA

Think of yourself as a farmer for a moment. A good farmer nourishes and develops the microflora in the soil, enabling nature to grow a healthier, more abundant crop. Flora break down soil nutrients, minerals, and rocks, into usable food for the plant. Nourishing your friendly flora is the same kind of process. Your job is to feed your flora.

Fructooligosaccharide (FOS) feeds friendly bacteria. It acts like a fertilizer that nourishes existing flora and stimulates the growth of new bifidobacteria. FOS also helps retard the growth of bad bacteria, regulates blood sugar and bowel movements, and intensifies the viability and adhesion of good bacteria. FOS can also help lower total cholesterol while raising "good" cholesterol (HDL).

FOS is a chain polymer of fructose that is non-caloric and is found in a variety of foods. FOS sugars are linked together in such a way that they cannot be broken down. Instead, they travel to the intestines where they are digested by friendly bacteria.

Good food sources of FOS include Jerusalem artichoke (tuber), summer vegetables, asparagus, chicory root, leeks, onions, garlic, oats, barley, and rye.

The second thing you can do to improve the population of beneficial microflora is to plant more seeds. Just like the farmer, if you want more plants, you have to plant more seeds. One way to plant more seeds is to consume foods that contain these bacteria, like yogurt and kefir. You can also plant seeds by using probiotics, the supplemental form of good bacteria.

BUY RIGHT

It's important to remember that intestinal flora are alive. If you choose to use supplemental intestinal flora, be sure to pick a product that contains live flora.

Keeping these bacteria alive has been a real challenge for manufacturers—studies in both Europe and the US have shown that of the many products

available, only a select few actually contain beneficial levels of living organisms. The single best refrigerated product I've seen with living bacteria is Bio-K Plus. It's a Canadian hearty yogurt-like product that guarantees 50 billion live cells per 3.3-ounce bottle. You can find more information on Bio-K Plus at www.biokplus.com. The site includes a store locator.

A new technology that has significantly improved the quality of probiotics supplements—and the only non-refrigerated one I recommend—is a patented Japanese “seamless” encapsulation technology. This encapsulation process encloses the probiotics in a triple-layered capsule or beadlet where live bacteria powder is surrounded by a layer of vegetable oil, then coated with an acid-resistant shell of gelatin and pectin. This fat/gelatin/pectin layering seals off the bacteria from the damaging effects of oxygen and protects it from the acidic environment of the stomach, which ensures the bacteria are delivered alive and well to the intestinal tract. One company that carries probiotics using this technology is Enzymatic Therapy (www.enzy.com or 800-783-2286). Their product is called Acidophilus Pearls, and is available in health food stores.

Probiotics should be taken 30 minutes before or two hours after a meal to ensure an unimpeded delivery to your intestine. The two primary mistakes people make when they first begin seeding bacteria are buying a product that doesn't work and taking acidophilus and other probiotics with food. Setting regular, predictable mealtimes should help you avoid this common pitfall.

IBS: A Spastic Gut-Brain Dysfunction

Sometimes there are diseases that affect millions of people but are never heard of until some new drug is discovered. Now it is irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) that has been brought up through the minors to the major league of diseases. The good news is that this seriously disruptive and debilitating “syndrome” (a collection of symptoms without a definitive known cause) is finally getting the attention it deserves. The bad news is that the attention is due to a drug (Zelnorm) being offered as the treatment “solution”—which means that, if the process follows the conventional drug-for-disease model, not much research into Zelnorm's full nature is likely.

Analgesics: Relieving Yourself of More Than Just Pain

We know that acetaminophen can cause elevated levels of the serotonin byproduct 5-HIAA in the urine—which seems to suggest that acetaminophen interferes with serotonin metabolism. This interference may be from acetaminophen's effect on smooth muscles (like the intestines). For instance, the sudden appearance of asthma in a previously non-asthmatic adult is often linked to acetaminophen use—and the affected smooth muscles in the lungs are similar to the ones in the intestines. I believe too much acetaminophen causes smooth muscles to convulse—leading to asthma in the lungs and diarrhea in the bowels. The intestinal convulsions most likely interfere with serotonin metabolism, resulting in the elevated levels of 5-HIAA in the urine. Thus, some forms of diarrhea-predominant IBS may be caused by the overuse of acetaminophen. As in most things, moderation is the wisest course when using acetaminophen.

Let's be honest: A bowel problem is the least likely topic for discussion among friends. Breast cancer, yes; prostate problems, sure; heart bypass, definitely—but incontinence, gas pains, constipation? “No, please, no! Thank you so much for sharing, but no.” So the pain and embarrassment associated with this problem—disrespected by the public and medical community alike—is kept quiet by 25 to 50 million people in the US alone. What's more, IBS is a leading cause of work absences—so the impact of this syndrome is not only physical and emotional, but also social and economic.

WHAT LITTLE WE KNOW

IBS used to be called “spastic colon.” It's a chronic condition of ongoing gastrointestinal symptoms. While there is, as yet, no conclusive underlying structural or biochemical universal identifying trait, the characteristic symptoms of this syndrome include recurring abdominal pain (possibly relieved by defecation), bloating, constipation, and/or diarrhea. There are also non-gastrointestinal symptoms including headache, lower back pain, arthritis, non-cardiac chest pain, and difficult urination.

Avoid Known IBS Food Triggers

Improving your diet by being fully aware of what you eat will help immediately. While the culprits are different for each individual, here are some general foods implicated in IBS:

- Dairy products like milk and cheese
- Fatty foods like French fries
- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Chocolate
- Carbonated drinks
- Beans, cabbage, peppers—any food that irritates your digestive tract or gives you gas
- Grains (ones containing gluten may cause more symptoms)
- Spicy foods

While IBS sufferers should experiment with their diet to see which foods to avoid, I recommend also taking a plant digestive enzyme every time you eat—take one with a snack, two with breakfast and lunch, and three with dinner. I have found these enzymes improve digestion and decrease the IBS symptoms of gas, bloating, fullness, and irregular bowel habits. They ensure more complete digestion, less potential allergenic food exposure, less inflammatory and immune responses, and less potential for undigested food particles to be left to either putrefy or ferment in the gut.

While IBS seems straightforward to identify, on average it takes over three years and two misdiagnoses before the correct diagnosis is reached. We also know that about twice as many women as men are affected and, unlike so many of today's illnesses, it is found in most of the world's societies.

UNCOVERING PIECES OF THE IBS PUZZLE

There are a lot of medical clues, but the pieces of the IBS puzzle do not yet form a recognizable picture.

Food intolerances and allergies, as well as certain foods high in fat, are common triggers for IBS (but not for all people)—which means that rather

than blanket solutions, dietary recommendations will be different for each person.

Infections often herald the onset of IBS (but, again, not for everyone). Recent research suggests that pathogens do more than just make your gut susceptible to IBS; they actually play a role in the disease.

Neurochemical imbalances often seem to be central to the rise in incidence of IBS. Investigating these imbalances brings the concept of the gut as the “second brain” into focus for examination. The brain and the gut communicate via nerves and hormones—including serotonin and norepinephrine. Levels of these two chemicals affect the way IBS manifests itself.

Constipation-predominant IBS may be a result of elevated norepinephrine levels, which causes serotonin levels to decrease. (Serotonin is made in the intestines, which is also where 95 percent of the body's supply is located. Most of the remaining five percent is in the brain, with trace amounts in the blood and other organs.) Conversely, plasma serotonin is typically elevated in people with diarrhea-predominant IBS.

Hormone levels can also play a role. There appears to be a cyclical pattern associated with the menstrual cycle for many women. During the first half of their monthly cycle, constipation, straining, and passage of hard stools are more common. As the cycle progresses, hormones shift again. Progesterone levels drop, resulting in loose stools and diarrhea.

While further evidence is needed, I think each of these varied pieces will be important for solving the IBS puzzle.

POSSIBLE DRUG TREATMENTS

Since the causes of IBS are both varied and not entirely clear, the treatments are similarly numerous and indistinct. I'll address drug treatments first, and then move on to others that make more sense in terms of effectiveness and safety.

As I mentioned earlier, the constipation-predominant IBS treatment being touted on TV by one pharmaceutical company is Zelnorm—a 5-HT₄ receptor agonist (which means it imitates serotonin in the GI tract). Zelnorm works best on women and acts on nerve cells in the gut to stimulate a bowel movement. It aggravates diarrhea-predominant IBS and is not generally effective for men or anyone over

Gut-Focused Hypnosis

For many, hypnosis has been a highly effective IBS option. It has been a valid and recognized treatment by the AMA since 1958, and it is great to know that by helping our minds we are helping our bodies. Regardless of whether you are hypnotized by a clinician or you practice self-hypnosis, there is real hope for this therapeutic option.

Hypnotherapy is comfortable, easy, and relaxing. You are not asleep or out of control. In fact, you are completely in control with heightened selective awareness of your inner life and its workings. Furthermore, you become less aware of the outer world's distractions so you can focus on your inner world to bring a deeper and fuller understanding of life's lessons, a greater knowledge of your mind-body union, and a peaceful freedom from (and forgiveness of) life's traumas, injustices, and frustrations.

Mind-body therapies are powerful and transforming as you delve into your nature and specific circumstances. Enjoy the process, and know that it is not always pretty. In fact, focusing your attention inwardly is sometimes downright ugly and scary. Yet it is ultimately a liberating and unifying process for your journey in life. In the end, I believe you'll enjoy life and yourself better.

Remember, it is not only what we eat that affects our health, it's also what is eating us. Take the time to get more in touch with yourself so you can choose to release, transform, and grow from this moment forward.

the age of 64. Additionally, in clinical trials, the drug was only 5 to 11 percent more effective than a placebo—which means it doesn't even work for most women. Finally, the package insert admits that Zelnorm works best during the first month of use and that its benefits fade after three months.

Wow, what a great treatment option. It'll cost you a bundle at the drugstore, and it probably won't work well for more than a month. Zelnorm is a prime example of pharmaceutical shenanigans at their worst. It's neither a cure nor overly effective, but it

is a good way to separate you from your money for a few months.

If you want to go the drug route, a more effective treatment is low doses of antidepressants. But you need to consult a doctor who is familiar with prescribing antidepressants for IBS, because different types of antidepressants can either increase or decrease gastrointestinal contractions. Certain antidepressants are effective for constipation-predominant IBS and others are effective for diarrhea-predominant IBS. Typically, the dosage used for IBS is far lower than what is used for depression. Also, be aware that different classes of antidepressants have varying adverse effects. In fact, for some people, they can greatly worsen IBS symptoms.

PIECING TOGETHER EFFECTIVE SUPPLEMENT TREATMENTS

A safer alternative to prescription antidepressants is the natural antidepressant 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP). It is a supplement that treats constipation-predominant IBS (but not the diarrhea form) by increasing the natural production of serotonin. Standard 5-HTP dosage for depression is 100–200 mg, three times daily. I recommend half this dosage for IBS.

One supplement program I wholeheartedly recommend is the use of both prebiotics and probiotics to respectively seed and feed the good guys in your gut. Bacterial overgrowth is being recognized as an important component in the development of IBS. When the microbiological flora of the small intestine is compromised and pathological strains of bacteria take up residence there, the result can be excessive gas, bloating, and pain. A healthy, flourishing garden of vital bacteria in your GI tract will go a long way toward providing relief.

Another effective possibility is the long-recognized way of managing and calming a hypersensitive and overreactive GI tract through the use of enteric-coated peppermint oil, fennel tea, and gamma oryzanol.

Enteric-coated peppermint oil has been shown to be effective in reducing bloating, pain, and discomfort. While relatively inexpensive, safe, and available, it is a seldom-used gem. However, if you have acid reflux or heartburn, you should first consult an informed health care provider for advice.

Fennel seed tea is very soothing, and it's also one of my favorite flavors and aromas. It is anti-spasmodic (which means it's good for diarrhea-predominant IBS), and it promotes healthy digestion in general. It can provide welcome relief for bloating and gas pain—which are often the hardest IBS symptoms to overcome. It is a standard medical tea in Germany for dyspepsia. Organic seeds are best, and Heather's Tummy Tea, which you can find at most health food stores, is the right product. The longer you steep the tea, the more powerful it will be (and the better the results). Crush and break the seeds a bit (with a pestle or between two spoons) before steeping for maximum potency.

Finally, gamma oryzanol is a powerful extract from rice bran oil that has gastrointestinal mucus-protecting properties and exerts a regulating effect on the nervous system. Most of the research on gamma oryzanol's IBS benefits has come from Japan, but supplements are available in the United States.

A FAST AND SAFE TREATMENT OPTION

The latest development in the quest for gastrointestinal health is IBStrol. It is based on an ancient Tibetan formula, Xijizhuba. (Tibetans have a higher incidence of IBS because their diet contains common dietary triggers—dairy products and spicy foods.) The formula includes rhubarb, myrabolam, ginger, and Tibetan inula.

IBStrol was used in a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial of 580 people conducted at the Central Hospital of Jiangmeng City in China. It was found to be more than twice as effective as a placebo in relieving abdominal distention, bloating, epigastric pain, acid regurgitation, and heartburn. More than 90 percent of patients found relief.

IBStrol is not a cure, but it is a completely non-toxic treatment that can improve your GI health and quality of life by reducing IBS symptoms. It is extremely safe without any harmful adverse effects.

Regardless of the specific cause of your IBS, my recommendation is to be a good detective and work with a health care specialist to find your IBS triggers. Then focus on creating gastrointestinal stability while you work on your diet and lifestyle solutions. More than any other option and far beyond any pharmaceutical marketing promise, these will pay off by helping you to manage your gut, feel better, and live healthier.

★ ★ ★

Everything your body has ever been or will be is dependent upon nutrition. Every building block, every bone cell, even the sheen of your hair, is the result of the food you eat. But it won't do any good to select high-quality food if nutrients are not fully absorbed.

Attention to how you approach food, enzymes that help you achieve greater levels of digestion and absorption, and probiotics that support optimum digestive health, can make all the difference in how you feel. I encourage you to try these recommendations for one month. You will be amazed at the differences you will feel throughout your body!

Yours in Good Health,



Dr. Marcus Laux

Dr. Marcus Laux's

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You or someone you know probably has difficulty sleeping—which means it should be no surprise that insomnia is the most common of all sleep disorders. The problem is defined as either difficulty falling asleep or difficulty staying

asleep. When we're young, insomnia is generally temporary—and is usually due to stress or anxiety. Chronic insomnia is seen more often in people as they get older.

The causes of insomnia could be due to a number of factors beyond stress—including medications, underlying disease states, and low levels of certain hormones in the body. Most sleep drugs make you unconscious. The best way to solve the problem of insomnia is to address the root cause.

In this report, I will outline natural solutions that you can use to help beat your insomnia. But first, let's take a look at what constitutes normal sleep and why prescription medicines aren't always the best answer to sleep problems.

The Five Stages of Normal Sleep

Normal sleep has five recognized levels. The first four stages are called non-rapid eye movement (NREM) stages. When we're able to, we quickly move through these stages—getting deeper sleep with each stage. In the fourth NREM stage, the body restores and repairs itself—which is the key health concern for people suffering from insomnia.

After stage four NREM, we don't enter the fifth stage. Instead, the sequence reverses back to the first NREM stage. Then, if everything is normal, we enter the fifth stage—known as rapid eye movement sleep (REM). REM is the stage in which we dream, and it's linked to our ability to remember, learn, and adapt to changes. When people don't get their REM sleep, they become irritable and have difficulty thinking clearly and remembering things.

For adults, this entire cycle should be repeated four or five times each night—with sleep getting less deep toward morning as your hormone levels and body temperature slowly rise until you wake up.

Why Drugging Yourself to Sleep Isn't a Good Idea

As I mentioned earlier, insomnia is the most common of the sleep disorders—and you better believe the drug companies know it. Their ads look so enticing, and the promises so simple. Take their drug and you'll go to sleep for a full eight hours. Then you'll wake up refreshed and rejuvenated with a smile on your face. That's the bunk they're selling. It's shameful, misleading, and inaccurate.

There is no concrete clinical evidence that shows that taking drugs has any beneficial influence on your sleep. There's also no evidence that supports these drugs as useful in disease treatment or in preserving health. We do, however, have studies verifying that they make you less able to function the next day—regardless if you are able to “devote a full eight hours to sleeping” after you take them. Even when a study shows a minimal sleep improvement with a new generation of short-acting drugs that is at significantly lower

What's Causing Your Insomnia?

To find out what's causing your insomnia, ask yourself the following:

- ☐ Am I anxious?
- ☐ Do I have stress in my life?
- ☐ Am I consuming a lot of sugar, caffeine, or alcohol?
- ☐ Do I smoke?
- ☐ What medications am I taking?

If none of these factors apply to you, then your insomnia may be due to low levels of melatonin or a serotonin deficiency. Talk with your doctor to determine the cause of your insomnia and the best treatment for you.

levels in the blood by morning, there is still no benefit for daytime functioning for most people.

The fact is that these drugs don't bring about normal, restful, restorative sleep. They are potent knockout pills with serious side effects—and they are potentially addictive. Studies have shown that the brain wave patterns seen in a person in normal sleep are altered by these drugs. One of the common side effects of the drugs is sleepwalking—which includes sleep-driving, and sleep-crashing. What's more, if you stop taking the drugs without addressing the cause of your insomnia, you're right back where you started.

To be fair, these drugs may be okay when taken as intended—for one or two nights, ideally (and for only a week at the most). They're for people who have temporary stress-related difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep—though there are natural alternatives for these problems that are better and healthier for you. However, the number of prescriptions and refills for these drugs indicates that they're not being used as a short-term answer for temporary insomnia. What's worse, they, and drugs like them, definitely should not be prescribed for anxiety reduction—yet they often are.

Addressing the Cause

As I've already mentioned, many insomnia cases are brought on by stress and anxiety—and dealing with the situations that cause the problems are the best way to address the insomnia. Insomnia can also be brought on due to low melatonin or serotonin levels—which can be addressed by making sure you sleep in total darkness and by supplementing with melatonin or tryptophan. (I'll talk more about this in a moment).

The other major causes of insomnia are linked to diet and medications. Reducing your consumption of sugar, caffeine, energy supplements (such as ginseng), weight-loss supplements, and similar products can often help ease insomnia problems as well. In particular, you should never take any of these substances in the late afternoon or evening.

Additionally, while alcohol can relax and calm, it can also cause the body to release adrenaline and impair tryptophan moving into the brain—which disrupts serotonin levels. Sometimes you can put yourself to sleep with a drink or two, but then you might find you wake up again in a few hours (feeling worse and unable to go back to sleep right away). If that's your experience, then alcohol isn't effective for you.

OTHER CAUSES TO CONSIDER

Several hundred drugs can interfere with normal sleep. Make sure to check anything you may be taking. Low nighttime blood sugar levels can disrupt your sleep as well. Getting your blood sugar under control can keep you asleep. Eat a small meal of protein and complex carbohydrates a half hour before going to bed. That's the quick answer; the best solution is to fix your diet and metabolism as a long-term solution.

Finally, restless leg syndrome (RLS) or periodic limb movement syndrome (PLMS) can be frustrating and cause insomnia. Preliminary research shows that folks with RLS or PLMS had significant improvement by taking 300 mg of magnesium each night for four to six weeks. I would also consider extra folic acid, B12, and iron to assist in calming your muscles to sleep.

Get to Sleep with Help from Nature

Remember, the natural cure for insomnia is to find your cause. However, it can take time to find and address the cause. In the interim, be safe and effective by going with natural products that work

well, are more cost effective, and come without major side effects.

LACTIUM

Lactium is a natural milk peptide that I highly recommend for addressing stress or anxiety (which is often all someone needs to do to wipe out insomnia). The anti-stress properties of this milk derivative have been supported in animal research and human clinical trials. What's more, in vitro studies have shown that it binds to the same receptor as powerful pharmaceutical drugs (benzodiazepines) that are designed to pacify, anesthetize, and subdue. However, while the animal research indicates it has similar relaxing effects to benzodiazepines, it doesn't have the same adverse effects.

Specifically, studies designed to evaluate chemical and psychological addiction, memory impairment, and toxicity reported no potential adverse effects. And dosages 10 times the recommended amount showed no potential for negative changes in behavior, genetic damage, or birth defects.

Several double-blind placebo-controlled clinical studies have given some insight into the benefits you might expect from this milk marvel. One study of over 50 healthy people, taking 150 mg/day for one month, showed reduced stress reaction—measured by a decline in blood pressure in response to mental stress testing. Participants reported seeing optimal results by the 11th day, which lasted through the end of the study. Other people have reported that they noticed effects even more rapidly, sometimes on the first day.

Lactium can be used for either acute anxiety or for chronic stress. While effects can be felt within an hour, a few days of use are needed to fully appreciate its benefits. Stress, tension, and anxiety not only lead to sleep disturbances, but contribute to high blood pressure, mental challenges, and other health issues.

An excellent source of lactium is a product called De-Stress from Biotics Research (800-231-5777; www.bioticsresearch.com). Note: Biotics Research sells only to healthcare providers, but I asked them to make an exception and offer De-Stress to my readers of *Naturally Well Today*. So be sure to mention that you are a subscriber when you call.

MELATONIN

Melatonin is a very effective sleep aid for people whose insomnia is due to their natural melatonin

levels being low. It's a brain hormone that's involved with our circadian rhythms and sleep patterns. If you use it, I only recommend using a sublingual form. Source Naturals makes a natural-flavored sublingual that's reliable, quick, and doesn't produce any side effects. You can find it at health food stores. Visit www.sourcenaturals.com to find a store near you. Take 1–5 mg (if this is your first time taking it, start with 1–3 mg) 15–30 minutes before you're ready to doze off. Chew it up quickly, but keep it in your mouth for a few minutes while swishing it around, and then swallow. It works well within 10–20 minutes.

If you wake up four hours or more after taking it, the effects of the supplement will have already passed and won't help you get back to sleep. On the other hand, if you take too much you could still be sleepy in the morning. If that happens, just open the shades or turn on some bright lights. You'll be fine in short order once you let the light shine in.

TRYPTOPHAN

Tryptophan is the indirect precursor to melatonin. In the body, melatonin is made from serotonin, which is made from tryptophan. People with a serotonin deficiency can experience sleeplessness, frequent awakenings, mood problems, and other health issues. By supplementing with L-tryptophan you can raise your serotonin levels naturally—and further improve melatonin production as a result.

Tryptophan supplementation is very effective for both those who have trouble getting to sleep and those who wake many times during the night. Some say 5-HTP is better since it's basically tryptophan that is one step closer to becoming serotonin. However, it has not produced adequate clinical results for me. I prefer L-tryptophan since 5-HTP can't fulfill all of tryptophan's roles in the body. Even though tryptophan is back on the US market, it can be difficult to find. One good source is FTH Nutraceuticals, Inc. (www.fth-inc.com; 866-554-7900). For supporting your sleep, take 1–3 capsules 30 minutes prior to sleep. If you wake up later, you can repeat your dose to get back to sleep and stay asleep.

VALERIAN

Valerian root is my preferred natural sleep aid. It can help you fall asleep faster and deeper, and increase your REM dream sleep while helping you wake fully alert. It has a long history of traditional

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy May Also Help

There are no proven drug cures for chronic insomnia caused by psychological or behavioral issues. However, there is a method that addresses these causes of chronic insomnia. It has recently come to light with a Norwegian study published in the June 28, 2006 issue of *JAMA*. For long-term insomnia, the researchers used cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Elderly people with chronic insomnia that had gone on for more than a month got more and deeper sleep using CBT.

With CBT, patients learn specific tools for getting a good night's sleep. It is often taught over a six week timeframe in which the participants learn relaxation techniques, how to control their sleeping environment to reduce interruptions and external stimuli, and how to restrict sleeping hours (among other changes)—making it easier to fall asleep when bedtime arrives. For more information on CBT and how to find a cognitive behavioral therapist near you visit the National Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists Web site, www.nacbt.org.

use, with strong clinical research backing it up. Supplement formulas commonly combine valerian root with other mildly sedative herbs—including lemon balm, hops, passion flower, scullcap, and chamomile. I highly recommend Valerian Nighttime with Lemon Balm from Nature's Way for chronic insomnia sufferers as well as those people who need occasional help when traveling or who are dealing with other events that interrupt their regular sleep schedules. Take one to two tablets one hour before bedtime. To find a store near you that sells Nature's Way Valerian Nighttime, visit www.naturesway.com.

SEDITOL™

I want to tell you about a new natural sleep aid that works differently than the supplements I mentioned above. Seditol helps you get a good night's sleep by binding to receptors in your central nervous system that are associated with physical and emotional arousal, as well as stress. Studies suggest it also promotes relaxation and helps to reduce fatigue caused by lack of sleep. More simply put: Seditol relaxes your body and turns off your racing mind, so you can fall asleep and stay asleep.

Clinical trials support the effectiveness of this breakthrough. In one study involving 618 people with insomnia, 88 percent said that Seditol helped them get a restful night's sleep. What's even better news is that 89 percent of the participants said they woke up feeling refreshed instead of groggy.

Seditol contains two key ingredients—both of which are proprietary extracts. Magnolia (*Magnolia officinalis*) has been shown to reduce stress and relax muscles, while ziziphus (*Ziziphus spinosa*) has been used as a sedative in traditional Chinese medicine for over 2,000 years.

Seditol is manufactured by Next Pharmaceuticals, Inc. You can purchase their product from Jarrow (www.jarrow.com; 800-726-0886) or WebVitamins (www.webvitamins.com; 800-919-9122). Take it as directed on the product label.

★ ★ ★

By finding the cause of your insomnia and taking steps to address it, you can take care of the problem without resorting to drugs that knock you out and negatively affect your health. In the meantime, try one of the natural solutions that I've covered in this report and avoid the shameful sleep drugs at all costs.

To Your Good Health,



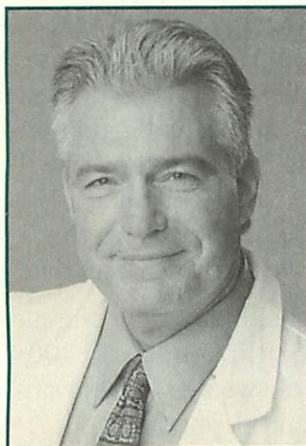
Dr. Marcus Laux

Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

August 2007



Dear Friend,

For much of his career, the great scientist and researcher Louis Pasteur had a running argument with another Frenchman, Antoine Bechamp. Pasteur devoted his life to researching the various microbes he found everywhere around him. His "germ theory" held that the cause of most health problems could be laid at the feet of one harmful pathogen or another. Bechamp believed that we coexist with most elements of our environment and things only turn nasty when the environment changes. On his deathbed, Pasteur finally acknowledged in a whisper that, "...[Bechamp] was correct: the microbe is nothing; the terrain is everything."

For you, this means that true health requires balance. Your body is constantly changing in response to your environment. As long as those changes are adequate, you remain healthy. But if a feedback system gets out of line, or some beneficial item is no longer available, your health suffers. A classic case is *Candida*. This simple yeast lives in and on your body, performing helpful functions your whole life long. But when the natural forces that keep it in check weaken for any reason, the *Candida* begins to take over and you can fall ill. The story beginning on page 6 will help you recognize *Candida* infections and show you how to repair your terrain.

Another example is peripheral artery disease, one of the latest targets of drug-makers. In this case there's seldom an actual pathogen at work, but the terrain certainly could use some work. I'll start off this issue with an ancient therapy that's finally starting to get some respect in the conventional world.

Here's what you need to know this month.

VOLUME 5 NO. 2

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Natural Healing

The Essence of Healing—Healing With Essences

I love it when nature's own substances prove superior to today's synthetic pharmacy. Consider the essential oil combination known as "The Vinegar of the Four Thieves." According to documented accounts, this rich mixture of potent aromatic oils, including cinnamon and clove oil (and, depending on which report you read, rosemary oil), was soaked into handkerchiefs worn over the mouth and nose of grave robbers in Europe during the time of the black plague. They plundered for years without falling ill, in spite of their close proximity to the sick and the dead. These crafty crooks stayed healthy, while grave diggers and mourners were dropping like flies. Truth? Or hokum?

Based on official records, and my inside sources, I'd say it's very true. The plague was transmitted two ways: by bites from infected fleas, and through the air from the respiratory fluids of coughing plague victims. In a recent study, cinnamon, clove, and thyme oil were found to be highly effective at killing major respiratory disease pathogens. In another study, clove and rosemary oils were great against a variety of bacteria, and even more powerful when used together.

Most people who know about essential oils have used them as aromatherapy. There's certainly a spot for scents in every healer's bag of tricks, but there's so much

more to essential oils than their aromatic allure. For example, I've written before about the use of peppermint oil to treat IBS and bacterial infections in the intestines (February 2005), and in the French "Vidal," their equivalent of the PDR, 15 percent of all the officially recognized medications contain essential oils—that's more than 1000! Perhaps one of the most important uses of essential oils is to prevent and control infections of all types.

Moving Beyond the Nose

Essential oils are highly complex, often containing hundreds of active elements—which makes it "essentially" impossible for microbes to become resistant to their actions. The variety of components means that they work in many ways. Besides killing pathogens on contact by rupturing their membranes, essential oils can support tissue health, change pH levels, and stimulate immune modulation temporarily, making it almost impossible for pathogens of all types to resist for very long.

The list of essential oils with impressive antibacterial activity against tough bugs like *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and *Listeria* species—common hazards in foods like unpasteurized fruit juices—is pretty long. In one study, a tiny dose of essential oil from lemongrass was highly effective at inactivating those bacteria in apple and pear juices. Even more impressive: Thus far, there's no evidence of bacteria developing resistance to essential oils, the way they do with antibiotics. Even the infamous methicillin-resistant strain of *Staphylococcus aureus*, responsible for the dangerous infections patients catch in hospitals, gets KO'd by humble oregano and tea tree essential oils.

Another oil unfazed by antibiotic-resistant *Staph* is manuka oil, from the leaves and bark of New Zealand's manuka tree (a close cousin of Australia's tea tree). I'm happy to sing the praises of tea tree oil

as an antibacterial, but manuka oil may be 30 times more effective, thanks to its natural concentration and bioactivity of compounds called triketones.

It's well tolerated and pleasant-smelling, so it can be used directly on the skin, undiluted or mixed with cosmetic or therapeutic oils, creams, lotions, shampoos, and soaps. A mouthwash made of a 0.2 percent solution of manuka oil (just 2 drops in 3 ounces of water) is powerful therapy against the bacteria that cause cavities and periodontal disease. Look for East Cape manuka oil—it's got the highest triketone content. In fact, thus far it's had good therapeutic biocidal activity against all pathogens tested. There are several brands from New Zealand available on the Internet. One that's finally available in this country is Harmonic, at www.harmonicskintones.com.

To resist airborne pathogens, I've got my secret defense. I put a few drops of SHIELD Inhale, a 100 percent organic combination of sweet orange, lavender, eucalyptus, lemon zest, and peppermint oil, onto a tissue and inhale it deeply several times. This will wipe out any nasty microbes and offer you lasting protection. It's an air sanitizer second to none—a recent study confirms that the antimicrobial powers of essential oils are often greater in vapor form than as liquids. When the next superbug comes along, I'll have my Shield ready. I won't be robbing graves, but I'll do my best to stay out of one. NWT readers can get a discount on this historically based, medically potent respiratory rescue/protection formula. Visit the Web at www.almarome.com and use code ALMA04 for just the Inhale formula, or ALMA06 for the complete SHIELD lineup

Even viruses can't stand up to essential oils. My favorite for fighting herpes virus is melissa, also called lemon balm. Studies have shown that it acts against the virus that causes shingles, and that it even acts on strains that have become resistant to

DR. MARCUS LAUX

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Dr. Laux works closely with Natural Medica, a subsidiary of Healthy Directions, LLC, developing his unique formulations that supply many of the hard-to-find nutrients he recommends. Dr. Laux is compensated by Natural Medica on the sales of these nutritional supplements and health products, which allows him to continue devoting his life to researching innovative, effective health solutions.

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the common antiviral medication acyclovir. A lip balm containing melissa oil is effective for treating cold sores associated with herpes simplex virus.

Another option to stop the outbreak of a cold sore and cool the pain is equal parts of raven-sare and tea tree. Both are gentle on skin, so you can apply 1 drop of each every 15 minutes to the spot, and it can stop the sore from coming out. Use 4 times daily for 2–3 days, and that will be it!

Essential oils have other therapeutic effects besides killing pathogens. In one study, laboratory mice with experimentally produced peritonitis (inflammation of the internal abdominal lining) either got no treatment or were made to inhale tea tree oil vapors for four sessions of 15 minutes each. That second group had significantly less inflammation 24 hours later.

Mosquito repellents based on essential oils are an attractive alternative to DEET, which is toxic to humans as well as damaging to synthetic fabrics and plastics. But do they work? You're probably already familiar with the citronella candles found in every lawn and garden store. These do work, but pretty much only when you're directly in the smoke from the candle. A better option is limonene (from citrus rinds) and camphor oil. A recent study in Argentina found them to be powerful and long-lasting mosquito repellents. A Thai study found that undiluted clove oil was 100 percent effective at repelling mosquitoes for up to 4 hours (careful...it will burn your skin), while citronella and patchouli oil were 100 percent effective for 2 hours. A dependable repellent product I've used in the Amazon is Buzz Away, widely available in drug stores and on the Internet.

Using the Oils—and Some Cautions

Therapeutic oils need to be pure, and organic if you can find them. They should be distilled only once at a low temperature to capture and preserve the many bioactive substances. A high-quality essential oil extract is clearly labeled with its full botanical identification, including both common and Latin names—for example, "Thyme, *Thymus vulgaris*; CT, thymol, head flowers."

Essential oils are powerful medicine. As such, you'll need to take some care when using them. One serious caution is that unless specifically directed otherwise, you shouldn't use essential oils at their full strength, either internally or externally. And never use any essential oils when pregnant or nursing without qualified guidance.

It takes some guidance to use essential oils effectively. Unfortunately there's not much of a knowledge base in this country, or even in English, when it comes to using them. For help in getting you started I've put some information on the NWT Web site, www.drmarcuslaux.com. You'll find basic instructions there on how to select and use essential oils, along with suggestions for oils you should keep on hand. For more detailed information I recommend a couple Web sites that have reliable information. The first is the Almarome site mentioned earlier. The other is Original Swiss Aromatics. Their Web address is at the end of this article.

Finally, don't be dismayed by the fact that essential oils come in tiny bottles; you'll use only a couple drops at a time. When kept tightly closed in a dark glass bottle the oil will stay good for years.

Most of the studies in this review were published within the last few months. To me, the recent volume of excellent research on this subject is a healthy sign. Most essential oils are, as natural substances, widely available—and not patentable. The fact that people are willing to spend research dollars on a treatment they stand no hope of profiting from indicates the inherent therapeutic value of essential oils.

The essential oils discussed here are available in most health food stores. If you're standing in the store aisle reading the label on a bottle, you won't find information about the production method. Instead, you'll have to rely on reputable brands such as Aura Cacia. You can also order or request a catalog from the sources below.

- Indiana Botanic Gardens at www.botanicchoice.com or 800-644-8327
- Original Swiss Aromatics at www.original-swissaromatics.com or 415-459-3998

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Arteries Affect More Than Just Your Heart

So much of what happens in your body goes on without any awareness on your part. Consider your arteries. They naturally grow themselves to just the right size and thickness, and snake themselves into precisely the right locations, to make sure all your tissues—from your eardrums to the nailbed of your left big toe—get all the nutrition and oxygen they need to live a good, long life. When your circulatory system is healthy, every single cell gets what it needs. But if there's a problem in that circulatory system, certain parts of your body suffer. That's when the medical community puffs up and sticks a label on you. Cardiovascular disease. Dementia. Erectile dysfunction. Intermittent claudication. And for each label, there's a medical specialist with a basket of one-size-fits-all treatments.

Unfortunately, this micromanaged approach to medicine ignores the fact that all of these conditions are caused by various parts of your body being deprived of the blood supply they need. Each label may be different but they're all manifestations of the same thing. Conventional medicine is finally waking up a bit and recognizing this common link, but they're still stuck with the labeling habit: peripheral artery disease (PAD). That is, atherosclerosis (a.k.a. narrowing and hardening) of the arteries away from your body's core: for example, your head or legs. Let's talk about how that happens, and how to turn it around.

Your Arteries Go From Good to Worse

When you're a newborn baby, the endothelium (inner lining) of your arteries is a satiny-smooth membrane with no wrinkles, holes, or hangups. Blood cells whiz right on through, without hesitation. But certain factors in life can damage your endothelium—which is, after all, only a single cell thick—making it inflamed, rough, and raw. Platelets—blood cells that glue themselves to wounds to stanch bleeding—start piling themselves onto the damaged arterial walls, and LDL cholesterol spackles itself over those lumpy repairs to try to smooth things over. (This is the cholesterol commonly known as the “bad” kind, but as you'll remember from my May 2007 NWT you do need cholesterol for good health.) Once the cholesterol begins to oxidize it can become encased inside arterial walls. The openings inside your arteries

get smaller, eventually unable to deliver adequate amounts of blood to all your cells. That's PAD. Up to 10 million American adults, and as many as 20 to 25 percent of the over-50 crowd, are estimated to have it. And PAD is two to three times more common in men than women.

What causes the damage that leads to PAD? The quick answer is anything that inflames your arteries. That includes things like smoking, bad diet, free radicals, insulin resistance, obesity, diabetes, lack of exercise, toxins, and stress—including emotional stress. With inflammation there's a rise in your blood levels of caustic, inflammatory chemicals such as homocysteine, interleukins, and C-reactive protein (CRP). And because these things are in your blood, the lining of your arteries is the first casualty.

The initial changes in the arteries are what's known as “silent” PAD. As the situation progresses, reduced circulation creates a whole set of other changes that make things even worse. Your blood gets thicker, there's actual damage to muscle fibers and cellular DNA, and metabolism changes within muscles. This is when symptoms start to appear.

PAD's Bads

The most commonly recognized symptom of PAD is intermittent claudication (IC). This is a closing-off of the blood supply to your legs or arms, causing oxygen starvation and severe cramping of the affected muscles during exercise. The pain is relieved by rest, usually within a few minutes. The most common scenario is severe cramping in the calf muscles of your lower legs, due to narrowing in the popliteal artery—which crosses behind the knee and carries blood to the muscles of the lower leg and foot. The condition can become more severe, resulting in ischemic rest pain. This is the same as IC except it's more advanced, causing severe pain even at rest.

Many of the changes we commonly accept as “normal” aging are also related to PAD, including the loss of vision and hearing. Others include:

Dementia As blood flow to the brain is reduced, your thought processes slow and you begin to lose a wide range of functions—judgment, processing speed, even memory and reflexes.

Erectile dysfunction The arteries in the pelvic region and penis are especially vulnerable. For many men, ED is the first sign of a circulatory problem.

There's a very simple, dirt-cheap screening test called the ABI (ankle-brachial index). Your at-rest blood pressure is taken in the usual place on your

Consider Chelation

In intravenous chelation therapy, a protein known as EDTA is slowly infused into the bloodstream to bind and remove the mineral portion of the plaques that coat PAD-afflicted arteries. A full course can be administered in 20 to 30 doses over 4 to 6 weeks. It has worked very well for some of my patients who had debilitating leg pain, reversing their symptoms and clearing their arteries within an amazing 6 months. Of course, it won't work long term unless the cause of the arterial damage is also addressed with diet, exercise, and supplements. For help finding a clinician who will do it, call 888-439-6891 or visit the Web site of the American College for Advancement in Medicine (ACAM), at www.acamnet.org. One caution is that the total cost of a course of therapy can be \$4,000 and up, and it's seldom covered by insurance.

arm, and then on one of your ankles. The systolic (higher) figure from your ankle is divided by the systolic figure from your arm. A result of 1.0 or more is healthy. If it's less than 0.95, that suggests peripheral artery disease. If it's less than 0.8, you probably have intermittent claudication. If it's less than 0.4, you may have ischemic rest pain. For more details, an ultrasound examination can be used to assess the blood flow through each artery and check for blockages. CT scans and MRI can also help.

Clearing Out Arteries the Right Way

Mainstream treatment includes toxic cholesterol-lowering statin drugs, blood thinners, same-day surgeries (such as getting the worst arteries drilled out or getting their plaque smushed by a balloon), and the current fave on prescription pads everywhere: the drugs pentoxifylline (Trental) and cilostazol (Pletal), which have significant side effects such as dizziness, heart palpitations, headaches, diarrhea, gas, and other fun things. Mainstream medicine claims that these treatments can keep your PAD from getting worse, but that "nothing" can reverse the arterial damage you've already sustained.

Hogwash. The natural approach to PAD has a proven and impressive track record for not only relieving symptoms but actually opening up the arteries. I won't say it's easy, but it is simple, well-researched, and proven—and free of significant side effects. Best of all, you'll get relief from the symptoms that have been piling up. Here's how to heal your arteries naturally.

Stub out the cigarettes. If you haven't quit smoking already, do it now. Smoking floods you with toxic free radicals and dramatically depletes

your vitamin C. If you don't quit, all other treatments for PAD will be less effective.

Exercise. Even mainstream medicine recognizes that regular exercise is the most important thing you can do to prevent or treat PAD. It improves your circulation. It increases your levels of HDL "good" cholesterol (which helps dissolve plaque and, in turn, reduces your chance of heart attack and stroke, for which PAD is a major risk factor). It diminishes other symptoms of PAD such as erectile dysfunction and senile dementia. And it encourages the growth of collateral circulation—brand new branches of arteries that bypass badly clogged ones. It actually helps solve the problem, rather than just putting another coat of paint over it. Ask your health care professional to refer you to a physical therapist/personal trainer who's familiar with PAD, or to help you plan a program tailored for your condition.

Do these two in conjunction with dietary and supplement changes listed below and you'll feel better and reverse the process much faster.

Fix your diet. You need less free radical-generating junk and more protective phytonutrients and antioxidants—the real kind, from real fruits and vegetables. For a good guideline, take a look at the Pritikin diet. You want high-fiber whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, without trans fats, sugar, and other refined carbs that dominate the American dinner table. This will not only help you restore your waistline and your arteries, it will also help stabilize your blood sugar levels. (I've had patients completely reverse their diabetes through diet alone—and diabetes is, as I've said, a major risk factor for PAD.)

Take supplemental nutrients. Dr. Linus Pauling discovered that if you don't get enough of the right kind of vitamins, such as C, A, E, and B-complex, the integrity of your arteries suffers. And, despite what most doctors say, research shows that nutritional therapy really can remove arterial plaque.

High-quality multinutrients such as BioComplete will provide you with the support your arteries need for total health. Combine it with food-based antioxidants like Native PhytoNutrients to put down inflammation and cool free radicals.

Take ginkgo extract. Extensive double-blind studies have shown that ginkgo is real therapy for intermittent claudication, significantly improving the ability to walk without pain. In one study, relief was equivalent to that achieved with pentoxifylline, and the longer you use ginkgo, the better it works. The most effective product is Ginkgold, from Nature's

Way; 120 to 240 mg daily. It contains the ginkgo extract used in most of the published research.

Take carnitine. In double-blind trials, people who had PAD with intermittent claudication were given either L-carnitine or its derivative, propionyl-L-carnitine (PLC). Within just three weeks they saw a 75 percent or more improvement in their ability to walk without pain or side effects. PLC has been the stronger performer in the more severe cases. The standard dose of PLC in the studies was 1 gram daily for 2 months, then 2 grams daily for another 2 months, and if further improvement was needed, increasing the dose to 3 grams daily. I recommend that you begin with 2 grams daily, and re-evaluate your situation after six months.

Take nattokinase—an enzyme derived from fermenting soybeans. It's been shown to be a powerful artery protector. Be sure to take a minimum of 2,000 FU (fibrin units) per day. You should use a product that has had the vitamin K removed (vitamin K promotes normal blood coagulation).

Let go. Find a stress-reducing strategy that works for you, and do it faithfully. A hobby, a walk in the woods, meditation, even just listening to calming music can provide relief. This isn't window dressing. Stress is a significant contributor to PAD, and the only thing that can reduce it is steadfast, devoted attention to bringing it down. And the only person who can do that for you is you.

Get tested regularly and stay on target. To start with, ask for the ABI test, as described above, as well as blood tests for C-reactive protein (CRP) and homocysteine, which can give you a handle on how you're doing in the inflammation department. You'll also see positive changes in the symptoms you've been experiencing, but the test results will give you an objective measure of your progress.

Once you have your arteries cleared out you'll be amazed at how much younger and better you feel all over. You'll have more energy, you'll think more clearly, you'll move more easily. Life is good again.

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Resources

Propionyl-L-carnitine GPLC www.jarrow.com

Natural Wellness

A Diagnosis That Doesn't Exist

If modern medicine doesn't know how to “fix” a situation, they tend to shrug it off as unimportant—or even nonexistent. Twenty years ago chronic fatigue was the ignored condition. Today it's infection by the organism *Candida albicans* that's being ignored. The medical community doesn't give much notice to *Candida* as a disease producer, even though it makes about 80 million Americans miserable with symptoms such as headaches, sinus problems, asthma, food sensitivities, abdominal bloating, gas, diarrhea, sore joints and muscles, mental fog, skin rashes and itches, recurrent vaginal yeast infections, athlete's foot, and, yes, chronic fatigue. That's quite a rap sheet. So how come *Candida* gets no respect?

It's mostly because its symptoms can masquerade as other, more “recognized” diseases: Epstein-Barr virus infection, fibromyalgia, hypothyroidism, hypoglycemia, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome...the list goes on. *Candida* isn't even on the radar, and you get misdiagnosed.

Not Just Another Bug

Depending on when and where you look at it, *Candida* is either a yeast or a fungus. And, like a lot of other pathogens, you don't “catch” it—it's a normal partner with your body, mostly found in the gastrointestinal tract, vagina, and skin folds, where it has a legitimate job: eating dead tissue. It also feeds on “unfriendly” bacteria in your gut, which helps your internal environment maintain balance between good organisms and bad ones. So...*Candida* is a friend, as long as your natural checks and balances are in harmony.

But it can turn on you, too, and become an aggressive fungus. When that happens, at least one of the following three factors is always involved:

A decline in intestinal bacteria. This relieves the competitive pressure that normally holds *Candida* at bay. It can happen from poor diet, poor digestion, prescribed antibiotics, and “accidental” antibiotics (from eating antibiotic-laced meat).

A weakened immune system. Chronic viral infections, chemotherapy, and exposure to toxins and pollution commonly have this effect, through immune-system wear and tear. Another factor: steroids, including prescription steroid medications such as prednisone, and natural cortisol made by your own adrenal glands in response to stress.

A disabling diet. Sugars and refined grains are yeast's favorite foods. If your diet is overly sweet, *Candida* flourishes—especially in your colon.

Bolstered by these conditions, *Candida* develops elongated, root-like rhizoid “legs”—which can keep the absorptive doorways from your gut to the bloodstream open long after they should be clamped shut. This access allows *Candida* and other undesirable substances to enter your bloodstream at will. Now, every tissue in your body is at risk. When this happens, your body can react to the toxins, partially undigested molecules, et cetera, with allergic, inflammatory, and other immune reactions.

Treating *Candida*

The first hurdle is getting diagnosed. Get one of those all-too-common misdiagnoses and you could end up with prescriptions for antibiotics and steroids—exactly the wrong thing for your condition. And, because *Candida* is normally present in your system, lab tests are still imperfect.

Having said all that, diagnosing it really isn't all that hard. Your history and symptoms are quite revealing. It requires identifying which of the three factors listed above is in your history, identifying what your symptoms are (so you have an idea where *Candida* has set up housekeeping), and then experiencing a positive response to antifungal treatment.

To be effective, treatment has to incorporate antifungal therapy, plus therapy to restore microbial balance in your body. Any single therapy is usually doomed to failure, no matter how good your initial results seem. I choose from the list below, according to the patient's individual's constitution and needs. Where applicable, follow package directions. Most of the items discussed here are widely available on line and at health food stores.

Reduce vaginal candidiasis. If you have recurrent vaginal yeast infections, you've probably been given a prescription for a product to kill *Candida* in the vagina. What's wrong with that? Quite frequently, it's only half the job. *Candida*'s base camp can be in your colon, which quickly reinfects your vagina. I recommend the vaginal antifungal suppository called Yeast Arrest that puts the antifungal agents right where they need to be. For long-term success, you'll need to address the other topics below.

Mow down your *Candida* overgrowth with systemic antifungal treatments. To prevent resistance to treatment, use at least three of these antifungals, in rotation, for three to five days each.

- Dr. Hyla Cass' *Candida* Clear. A proven synergistic formula of caprylic acid, pau d'arco, oregano oil, black walnut, and biotin.
- Berbercap. Contains the broad-spectrum antifungal berberine, from the root of the Oregon grape shrub.
- Candi-B. An excellent anti-*Candida* product containing several sources of berberine, plus Chinese herbs to promote healthy intestinal microbial balance and normal liver function.
- ParaMicrocidin. A high potency antifungal from citrus seed extract.
- SF722. With the antifungal castor bean oil.
- Tricycline. Contains berberine from goldenseal root, combined with herbal artemesia and citrus seed extract.
- Yeast Formula. Contains goldenseal root and antifungal essential oils of oregano, thyme, and peppermint. (There's those essential oils again.)
- NOTE: Prescription (synthetic) antifungals such as Nystatin, Nizoral, Diflucan, and Sporanox are hard on your liver and expensive, and I frankly don't use them much. They work great at first, but the results don't hold up long term.

Nix the sugar and refined grains from your diet—they're concentrated yeast food. If you need a sweetener, use stevia or xylitol. Cravings for sweets are actually satisfied better by eating protein, but if you must you can have an occasional half grapefruit, or a half cup of whole berries or fresh pineapple. Once you've reestablished balance, other whole fruits can reappear in your daily diet.

Boost your friendlies. As you're trimming back the *Candida*, you need to restore a healthy internal environment so it won't grow right back. In your digestive system, the bad bugs, including *Candida*, will take over if you let them—just as weeds appear first on a vacant lot. Both probiotics and prebiotics help re-establish a healthy balance in your gut. I've had good results with Bio-K Plus (a refrigerated yogurt-like product that guarantees 50 billion live cells per 3.3-ounce bottle); *Lactobacillus sporogenes*—a hardy strain of lactic acid probiotic bacteria; and products that contains both probiotics and digestive enzymes such as BioComplete GI.

Prebiotics are the preferred energy source for the beneficial bacteria in our guts. I use Inuflora from Naturally Vitamins. It contains inulin, an organic non-digestible fiber from the Jerusalem artichoke.

Give your friendlies a hand. Probiotics get crowded out if your *Candida* population is booming. To change that, I like *Saccharomyces boulardii*—a

friendly yeast related to brewers yeast that aggressively displaces *Candida* as long as you take it, and goes away as soon as you stop. While boosting your intake of friendly gut bacteria, know they'll move in more easily with this good guy watching their back. Look for a product called Sacro-B.

Eat smart. Focus on whole foods, with their built-in fiber, digestive enzymes, prebiotics, and probiotics. Avoid foods with a high glycemic index (i.e., high sugar concentration), even certain veggies such as carrots, corn, potatoes, and peas. For a list of the glycemic index of various foods, see www.glycemicindex.com. (Click on "GI Database" at the left side of the home page.) When you eat meat, choose only organic, antibiotic-free sources. And remember that regular consumption of real yogurt, kefir, and other fermented foods supports a healthy colonic community.

Support your immune system as needed, with ProBoost Thymic Protein A for critical immune functioning and strong defenses.

After the antifungal treatment is well underway and you're starting to see results, add bovine colostrum, a uniquely immune-rich product that supports recovery, repair, and maintenance of your GI immune system like nothing else can.

The next two items won't apply to everyone, but you'll want to be aware of them.

Soothe your gut. If you have a heavy *Candida* overgrowth, you may feel pretty sick for a day or two after starting systemic antifungal treatment. That's because each *Candida* organism releases toxins when it dies and produces what's called a Herxheimer reaction. A massive die-off can add up to a significant toxic punch in the gut. To counteract that, I recommend a highly effective Chinese Herbal product called Quiet Digestion.

Detoxify, to enhance your immunity. Toxins preoccupy your immune system, making it way too easy for *Candida* to take advantage and keep its foothold. Jettison the junk now, please. To get your immune system back on track, green-food supplements such as chlorella, barley grass, or spirulina are a must. These living green foods stimulate your liver to dump the toxins it's holding. The result: a cleaner, more effective functioning detox system. All are available at health food stores.

I know this seems like an overwhelming list of things to do, but if you've been fighting a *Candida* overgrowth for a while you know how hard it is to overcome—and you'll do whatever it takes to get better. The good news is that once you have *Candida* back under control, it will return to its role of supporting your health rather than undermining it.

Resources:

Yeast Arrest www.vitanica.com or 800-572-4712

Candida Clear www.cassmd.com

Yeast Formula www.modernherbalist.com or 831-624-2773

Bio-K Plus www.biokplus.com to find a store near you

L. sporogenes www.modernherbalist.com or 831-624-2773

Quiet Digestion www.modernherbalist.com or 831-624-2773

Here's to being naturally well today and every day,

Dr. Marcus Laux

Coming Up In Naturally Well Today

- Reversing diabetes overnight with antioxidants
- Fiber—more benefits than just bulk
- Stroke

Resources

I've recommended more product solutions than usual this month, so look for resource information at the end of each individual story. I've also placed a complete list on the *Naturally Well Today* Web site, www.drmarcuslaux.com.

I Want to Hear From You

Tell me what you thought about this month's letter. What did you find most useful?

What would you like to see me write about in future issues?

Send an e-mail to:
[Feedback@
DrMarcusLaux.com](mailto:Feedback@DrMarcusLaux.com)



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While you're there, be sure to sign up for my free monthly health e-letters for advice on a variety of health concerns.

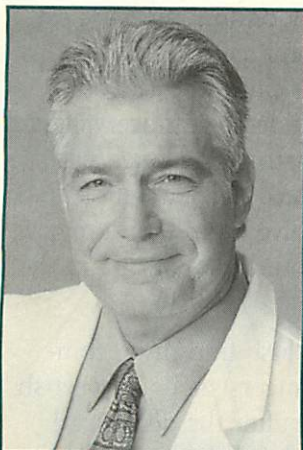
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Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

July 2007



Dear Friend,

The politician Tip O'Neill once said, "All politics is local." By that he meant that no matter what the issue, all the individual voter cares about is how it will affect him or her personally. I've come to believe that there's a comparable thought related to health: All medicine is personal. By that I mean that no matter how "serious" a health matter is considered by other people, to the one who has it even a hangnail is worthy of attention.

This month's topics illustrate my point. If you hear that someone has cancer, you may gasp and offer your sympathy. But if someone hears that you have a "minor" condition such as restless legs, they might look at you kind of funny and move a little further away. The medical establishment takes somewhat the same attitude. The big diseases—cancer, heart disease, arthritis—get the lion's share of the research money; for many of the conditions considered less important, there hasn't even been enough research to determine a cause. We'll start off with natural treatments for another of those "minor" conditions: acid reflux, also known as heartburn or GERD.

Here's what you need to know this month.

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Living Well

Keeping Acid in Its Place

If you've got it, you know it. And if you don't have it, you wonder what all the fuss is about. The standard story about acid reflux, or GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease), is that it's the result of the sphincter at the bottom of your esophagus not closing properly, allowing stomach acid to leak back up—sometimes to your throat. It's supposedly a lifelong problem, with a variety of symptoms from heartburn to "vomit burps," difficulty swallowing, coughing, and hoarseness. Eventually, it can lead to serious esophageal erosion and damage, and possibly even cancer.

As you'll see later, symptom relief is a snap. Your goal, of course, is to achieve long-term success so the problem goes away for good. You certainly weren't born with GERD, which means that something you've done helped create this symptom. Conversely, what you do now can undo the pattern of stomach distress that creates GERD. You can cure yourself with little effort.

GERD wasn't even an official disease until the drug companies saw new customers for this drug category. The drugs *do* help with symptoms, but at a big cost to your health. The standard medical spiel is that if you've got GERD, you're in luck(!), because even though the problem will plague you for the rest of your life, they have drugs they're happy to sell you...*for the rest of your life*. The drugs neutralize stomach acid and/or block your stomach's ability to make acid at all.

But...don't you need stomach acid? Absolutely. As I've mentioned before, in addition to its digestive duties, stomach acid is an upper GI disinfectant—killing off pathogens that otherwise can kick up a whole lot of trouble for you. To get rid of stomach acid is incompatible with nature.

Straight Talk About GERD

GERD is *not* a disease, and it's not caused by a "bad" sphincter or "too much" stomach acid. It's a sign that your digestive tract is stressed out from a number of factors, including foods full of sugar and chemicals; foods you're sensitive, intolerant, or allergic to; and certain "trigger" foods that supposedly relax the sphincter muscle at inopportune times. It can be aggravated by hiatal hernia and by anything that creates pressure on your belly. But if you're like most people, you can readily correct GERD with just a little effort to help yourself. For those once-in-a-while situations when acid reflux flares up, I'll tell you about some short-term natural treatments that'll help get you back on track.

The long-term fix is straightforward—change your lifestyle and diet—but there are plenty of myths out there. Those "trigger" foods, such as chocolate, hot spices, and peppermint, supposedly cause reflux. Does that mean they're the problem? Not in my book. To me, it means there's an underlying problem that's made your gut overreactive.

In a Duke University report, patients with GERD who hadn't responded to standard treatments went on a low-carbohydrate diet and within a week were completely free of symptoms. They were able to get off their GERD medications, and were even able to eat taboo foods without relapsing. I've used this approach for the treatment of GERD for many years with many patients, and I can report that it is one of the most effective interventions. It's not unusual for patients to report relief within just days.

In another study, people who ate high-fat, low-fiber diets had a higher incidence of GERD than people with more balanced, higher-fiber diets. This tells me that nutritional balance—*dietary sanity*—is the key. Cut out the sugar, emphasize healthy fats with

good protein, and ensure adequate fiber intake. While you're eating that good diet, shoot for more chews per mouthful. You'll be surprised to find that your habit is to swallow when your food is barely chewed. The better it's broken down, the quicker it'll move through your stomach, and ultimately the better your digestion.

Short-Term Relapse Relief

Anything that increases abdominal pressure can overpower your esophageal sphincter and *cause* a bout of reflux, the same way it can increase your risk of hiatal hernia. That includes being overweight, wearing clothes with tight waistbands, slouching, coughing, and being constipated. Make an effort to be aware of these factors and resolve them. For a review, see the article about halting your hiatal hernia in the May 2007 *Naturally Well Today*.

In that same article, you'll also find my recommendations for digestion enhancers such as *Sweetish Bitters* (Gaia) that you can use after the occasional rich or oversized meal to help keep things from bubbling back up. They work fast—practically instantly.

Another all-time favorite first aid-type remedy for the occasional acid reflux episode is *gamma oryzanol*, a plant sterol derived from the oil of brown rice bran. It encourages the stomach to move food out (in the right direction) and is also a powerful protector of the stomach lining. In a huge Japanese study at 375 hospitals, gamma oryzanol was 90 percent effective at relieving stomach upset. A terrific combination product called Heartburn Essentials contains 250 mg of gamma oryzanol, plus a supporting cast of other well-respected agents that soothe and support normal GI functioning. Follow the directions on the label. Another great gamma oryzanol product is Acid-Ease, which also contains natural digestive enzymes and the soothing herbs slippery elm and marshmallow. These products are available at most health food

DR. MARCUS LAUX

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Dr. Laux works closely with Natural Medica, a subsidiary of Healthy Directions, LLC, developing his unique formulations that supply many of the hard-to-find nutrients he recommends. Dr. Laux is compensated by Natural Medica on the sales of these nutritional supplements and health products, which allows him to continue devoting his life to researching innovative, effective health solutions.

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stores. Take two capsules for heartburn, and repeat the dose in 15 minutes if needed.

One potentially curative natural medicine is the oil in citrus rinds. It contains d-limonene, which normalizes neural control of the stomach and sphincter for quick GERD correction. In animal studies, the smell of grapefruit oil boosts fat-burning, and at the same time curbs appetite—a bonus if your GERD is aggravated by extra weight (try dabbing a little grapefruit essential oil on your pulse points for this aromatherapy effect). The recommended dose of d-limonene is 1,000 mg of standardized (98 percent) oil, every other day until symptoms subside, then as needed for occasional relief. Enzymatic Therapy's Heartburn Free, available at health food stores, is a great product containing d-limonene.

These solutions for acid reflux will work for nearly everyone. Start with the bitters or gamma oryzanol. You can also try the age-old solution of a half-teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in a little water or tea. These all work well and fast, but if you need more, by all means move on to the d-limonene. Soon you, too, will be wondering what all the fuss is about.

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Natural Wellness

Maximize Your Chemo

Cancer isn't something that invades you from the outside. Cancer lives inside us all, all the time. If you "get" cancer, it's because something inside your body has changed, allowing cancerous transformations and growth to get way too comfortable. Cancer cells can remodel your body into an environment where everything's just the way they like it—high in acid and sugar, low in oxygen and nutrients, and protected by a weakened immune system.

Cancer is a systemic problem with local manifestations. A tumor is a branch, not the cancer's roots. It's a result of a cancerous environment, not the total cancer itself. Treating the tumor is symptomatic, and you can only overcome cancer when your therapy also treats the cancerous "root" condition.

With that in mind, let's talk about the number-one treatment oncologists choose for many kinds of cancer: chemotherapy. I want you to understand the good and bad things it does, and how to make it do more good things and fewer bad things.

A Powerful Partnership

It may appear logical to kill cancer with chemo. But chemotherapy is essentially a harsh poison (a spill in a hospital necessitates a biohazard clean-up), and by itself has a meager track record—which is why drug companies define a "survivor" as someone who's lived maybe five years after diagnosis. They conveniently forget to mention that, after five years, cancer comes back in 96 percent of "survivors"—and it comes back mad as hell. Hiding that information in the fine print is real cutthroat marketing.

But let's be open-minded about this. By the time cancer develops to the point of diagnosis, it may have been growing for years and may be hundreds of millions of cells strong. That'd be a challenge for even the healthiest body to combat. So, the wisest policy may be to let chemotherapy do some of the heavy lifting while you focus on restoring your body to the natural, healthy state that makes cancer sit back down and behave itself. Getting chemotherapy and natural health strategies to work together for you, in other words, could be just the powerful cancer-fighting partnership you need.

How Does Chemotherapy Work?

Your body is made up of cells that are always dying. You stay alive because before each cell dies, it reproduces—creates a fresh copy of itself—in a five-step process. The first step is a resting phase that lasts anywhere from a few hours to a few years. Then there are four active steps that take up to several hours each. How long your healthy cells need to copy themselves is dictated by the length of their resting phase. Cancer cells have very short resting phases, and so they reproduce faster than most other cells do. Basically, chemotherapy targets any cells that are actively reproducing. Normal cells with longer resting phases are more likely to be resting during chemo—and are therefore less affected by the treatment. Pretty clever, eh?

I want you to bear in mind that oncologists desperately want to believe that chemotherapy cures cancer, even though the evidence says otherwise. They hang all their hopes (and their careers and incomes) on that. When chemotherapy ends, their treatment ends—they do nothing to restore the one and only thing that really can cure cancer: your body's inborn ability to keep it on a very short leash.

Chemotherapy causes a lot of collateral damage, which creates difficult side effects and leaves the body even less able to fight the good fight than it

was when the cancer first started. And because chemotherapy attacks cancer cells while they're reproducing, this sets the stage for mutations and faster development of new cancer cells that won't respond to the next round of chemo. This is why it comes back after treatment, more aggressive than before. It's one of oncology's weakest links.

The common side effects of chemotherapy—nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, mouth sores, hair loss, infections, anemia, exhaustion, and weakness—happen because of collateral damage to healthy cells that line your mouth and gut, your hair follicles, and the white cells and red cells in your blood, lymph, and bone marrow. Those cells reproduce faster than your average healthy cell, so they're vulnerable to being damaged by chemotherapy. The stronger your body is, the better the outcome, the fewer the side effects, and the more comfortable you'll be.

How Chemo Helps Cancer

As I explained in last month's article about the process of cancer, if your body becomes even a little more cancer-friendly, the disease will start changing its environment to suit itself. Researchers are just beginning to wake up to the fact that it might be wise to focus on ways to restore your body to its former healthy, cancer-unfriendly state—but I'm not holding my breath waiting until oncologists get on board. So here's the lowdown on how chemo gives cancer the upper hand, then I'll give you some powerful strategies to help you regain that upper hand.

The O₂ connection. In newborns, the oxygen level in their bloodstream is at 100 percent of capacity. It gradually declines to the mid- to low-90s by adulthood, and can continue to dip even lower with age. In one study of 73 "normal" men, blood oxygen levels ranged from 83.4 to 97.3 percent. The lower it goes, the more cancer thrives. What makes oxygen levels drop? Lack of exercise, smoking, heart or lung problems, anemia, depression, stress, and toxins (including chemotherapy chemicals) are a few of the many factors. Here's the sneaky thing. A *sudden* drop in oxygen causes obvious distress, and you'd get immediate help for that. But there's no clear warning when your oxygen levels fall *gradually*—it's pretty much a silent thing. So, *hypoxia* (oxygen deficiency) becomes "normal" for you. And that suits cancer just fine. Hypoxia encourages cancer to grow, and also creates resistance to conventional treatments.

The acid connection. Over 70 years ago, German biochemist Otto Warburg discovered that cancer starts when there's a shift in the way cells

use glucose: Instead of burning it with oxygen—and remember, a hypoxic person is low on oxygen—they ferment it and spew *lactic acid* as a byproduct. This information was ignored for decades, but suddenly cancer researchers are excited about the "Warburg effect." As your body becomes more acidic from all that lactic acid, it becomes easier for cancer to grow, spread, and resist standard treatments.

The nutrient connection. Cancer cells actively seek out a low-nutrient environment. One recent study showed that patients with colorectal cancer consumed significantly lower amounts of vitamins A and B1, folate, potassium, and iron. It's estimated that malnutrition causes perhaps as many as half of all cancer deaths, and weight loss increases the mortality rate of most cancers.

The immunity connection. Your immune system's worker bees—the cells that kill viruses, bacteria, and cancer cells—are, unfortunately, part of chemotherapy's collateral damage. That's because your bone marrow, which produces them, is vulnerable to chemo. So immune system weakness is an inevitable side effect, which (again) makes cancer's day. Drugs like Procrit and Neulasta, which stimulate the bone marrow, cost about \$1,000 a pop and cause pretty miserable side effects of their own.

Make Chemo Work Better by Strengthening Your Health

Even the best therapy works only if you stick with it. That's why each step here is simple. Yes, there are quite a few steps, but cancer is serious business. Plus, the therapies here give multiple powerful benefits, and most of them are things you'd be doing anyway—only now you'll be doing them better and with more motivation. Here are my favorites.

- Every day, **eat** foods chock-full of vital nutrients and antioxidants, including dark and vividly colored (and naturally alkalizing) organic vegetables, fruits, and legumes. Be sure to include the cruciferous family of vegetables such as broccoli, kale, turnips, cabbage, and cauliflower. They're rich in DIM (diindolylmethane), which is a direct cancer fighter. Juicing is great for delivering rich cancer-fighting phytonutrients to your body. If you have a hormone-dependent cancer, boost your DIM intake even further with a bio-available supplement such as BioResponse DIM or Indoplex. Follow package directions.

Whey protein shakes, with the addition of flaxseed (with its anti-cancer lignans) and balanced

omega-3/-6/-9 oils, taken between meals (or as the meal itself) meet your increased metabolic demands. Being well-nourished makes your chemotherapy more cancer-selective and less toxic to you, and brings better response. It also builds your immune competence, so your gatekeepers are sharp and strong, helping easily convert cancerous cells into debris to be flushed.

- **Eliminate** sugars (including high-fructose corn syrup), alcohol, refined grains (like white bread), and all processed foods from your diet. Cancer's preferred food is sugar, so starve it to make it weak and vulnerable. Plus, these foods are acidifying and nutrient-sapping, when what you need is high-quality, nutrient-dense fuel.
- **Drink** pure clean water between meals (so you don't interfere with stomach acid needed to digest food). You want to keep your body hydrated and your kidneys clean to flush waste away.
- **Exercise** every day. You don't need extreme exercise, just get moving—get your circulation pumping, delivering cancer-fighting oxygen (and needed nutrients) to your tissues, further neutralizing excess acid, and reducing stress. Chemo works better in a high-oxygen environment, because the cancer is weaker.
- Boost your **immune system** as well as your body's ability to heal, with the following proven medicinal formulations.

Mushrooms work well both alone and as partners with standard cancer treatment. They contain polysaccharides that bind to the surface of immune cells and activate them. There are several high-quality products available, all of which are proven immune boosters. They work against everything from flu to wound infections to cancer, increasing production and activity of several immune system elements including natural killer cells, T cells, and cytokines. They enhance the immune system's ability to detect and respond to cancer cells, and bring significantly prolonged survival and improved prognosis in patients with advanced cancer.

—AHCC (active hexose correlated compound) is a blended extract of Japanese mushrooms. It's used in Japan to soften chemo's side effects and improve healing and recovery from chemo. Take 2 to 6 capsules per day in divided doses.

—Noxylane-4 combines an extract of rice bran with three different mushroom extracts. Each of the three mushrooms has been used on its own as cancer therapy in Japan, and when combined with rice bran extract—itsself a powerful immune booster—they provide a significant punch.

—Immune-Assist from Aloha Medicinals is my favorite. It's the most potent, as it has more of the active ingredients. It is also grown under strict quality control and uses only organic mushrooms. Tell them you're a *Naturally Well Today* reader; you'll get a 10 percent discount.

Mistletoe is another potent therapy. The product with the most research behind it is Iscador, made from the fermented sap of the mistletoe plant. Because mistletoe is what's known as a *saprophytic* plant (meaning that it derives nutrients from its host, just as cancer does), plants that come from different trees have different properties. There are specific types of Iscador for specific types of cancer. Iscador is currently available by prescription only. You can have your physician contact the company using the information in the Resources box on page 8.

My friends, more is always better when it comes to fighting advanced cancer. You can only do too little—never too much.

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Natural Wellness

Calm Those Restless Legs

You can tell when the medical community is stumped. They label something a "syndrome" and move on. A condition called the "something-or-other syndrome" is really just a collection of fairly well-defined symptoms with no known or universally agreed-upon cause. (Sometimes, though, the cause does become known and the name still hangs around—as with Down syndrome and acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS.) One syndrome that seems to be on the rise these days is restless legs syndrome (RLS)—an irresistible urge to move the legs, usually worse at night.

Is RLS really a big problem? Ads for the prescription drug Requip would have you think so. The truth is, RLS still hasn't been defined. Some folks believe it's a distinct condition, but plenty of compelling evidence suggests that it's a symptom—like a headache—that can result from a variety of different

issues. That would certainly help explain why no single treatment works well for every case.

There's a big clue in the folks who most often get RLS: people with blood sugar issues, circulation problems, underactive thyroid gland, iron deficiency, or hormonal issues and fluctuations (such as women in late stage pregnancy who get better about a month after giving birth, and in menopausal women—where it often makes a brief appearance). The common thread is that there are major imbalances actively involved in these conditions, which is why treatments aimed at the symptoms of RLS (instead of at the underlying cause) bring underwhelming results. In fact, the standard prescription treatment has been known to actually make symptoms worse.

What concerns me even more is that Requip, the only FDA-approved drug for RLS, is in reality a treatment for Parkinson's disease that fiddles with the brain's release of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Parkinson's patients reported their RLS improved somewhat on their dopaminergic treatments. It's not a cure; it's not fixing the problem; but it could kill you. Not really a good trade-off.

Using it is a bit like doing open-heart surgery to cure the hiccups, when simply breathing into a paper bag would do a better job. Don't get me wrong here; I'm not saying RLS symptoms aren't the cause of serious misery. I am saying that RLS can be easy to resolve, without playing with dangerous drugs—and without causing yourself much, much worse problems, including cancer!

Natural Treatments for RLS

A number of treatments have been used for RLS. Most of them get dismissed as ineffective because, in fact, none of them work for all people. But then, that's the nature of therapies in general—natural or synthetic. It's not about the medicine; it's not about the diagnosis. It is about the person who has the condition, and what their specific needs are.

If you'll remember, I said earlier that the symptoms can be the result of several conditions. So the treatment that works for you is going to be the one that addresses your particular situation. If you're diabetic, then you need to address your blood sugar issues, and iron won't help. If you're anemic, then you do need the iron, and working on your blood sugar won't provide any relief from RLS.

I suggest you start at the top of this list and work your way down, asking, does this seem like me? The good news is that, even if the particular treatment

doesn't help relieve your symptoms, it will still be giving you other health benefits. For most of these therapies you'll see results pretty quickly. In days to weeks you can start to feel a difference, and reliable lasting relief is possible in months.

- **Caffeine and nicotine** (known stimulants of the nervous system) and/or **alcohol** (a known circulatory depressant) commonly contribute to RLS symptoms. If you feel you enjoy these habits too much to quit, try eliminating them for just one month. Sometimes this effects a complete cure. If this change works for you, I bet you'll happily reconsider letting those habits go. While you're at it, what other non-essential habits might make a difference? Could you drink water instead of soda when you're thirsty? Substitute a piece of fruit for those sweets? Have a salad instead of chips? Again, quitting these things often brings relief from RLS symptoms, and trust me—they won't seem quite so beguiling after that. You can see how RLS might be considered a gift if you make it an opportunity for positive change.
- If you regularly take prescription or over-the-counter **medications**, have a discussion with your physician or, especially, your pharmacist to see whether those substances might be contributing to RLS, and whether a substitute might work as well without stirring up your legs. Examples are Elavil, other mood drugs, cold and allergy drugs, anti-seizure meds, those taken for nausea, and many others. This change can lead to a rapid and complete cure.
- **Diet** can have a major impact on blood sugar metabolism, microcirculation, and inflammation, all of which appear to be involved in most cases of RLS. Controlling carbohydrate intake (by steering clear of empty sugars and refined starches) is curative for many patients.

If blood tests indicate that you're **iron deficient** (serum ferritin less than 30 to 70 mcg/L: toward the lower end is OK for women; men should be toward the higher end), try the iron supplement Floradix. Most iron supplements are very poorly absorbed, and the excess iron moving through your bowels can cause constipation. Floradix is iron in a liquid base of herbs and B vitamins, all of which improve this iron's absorption.

If you bump that dietary upgrade to the next level by adding chlorophyll- and iron-rich foods such as dark green leafy vegetables and organic, hormone-free meats, you're likely to see an even greater improvement. A diet high in protein and low in sugar, with adequate iron and nutrients,

Continued on page 8

Natural News Today

Another Drug Bites the Dust

You've heard me say this before, and I'll keep on saying it until the message gets through: When the FDA approves a drug as safe and effective, we should be able to expect that it's safe and effective.

With too many drugs, this is simply not the case; they're clearly neither safe nor effective. Remember HRT? Vioxx? The antihistamine Seldane? I blew the whistle on HRT in my book *Natural Woman*, *Natural Menopause* years before the full story got out. The evidence was plain, if you just looked at it. Big Pharma's drug development model is to curb symptoms, not find a cure. And the price for relief is too often disability and death.

Today in 2007, the spotlight is on the diabetes drug Avandia. In 2000, it was on Rezulin, in the same drug class as Avandia. That drug was withdrawn because it caused liver failure and was linked to 500-plus deaths. Avandia and Actos have been thought safer. But if you examine the story from the beginning, it's always been a train wreck.

The current data show that patients taking the drug are at a 43 percent greater risk of heart attack—and the risk of dying from that heart attack is increased by 64 percent. The irony is that people don't die from diabetes; they die from the other conditions that diabetes causes. And of those deaths, 65 to 80 percent (depending on the study you read) are related to cardiovascular disease.

Choosing the Wrong Goal

Avandia is designed to treat a common feature of type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance. It helps lower fasting blood sugar levels, and reduces glycosylated hemoglobin (a measure of long-term glucose control) by an average of 1 percentage point or less—nothing to write home about. FDA approval was based solely on these numbers, rather than on any long-term life-enhancing benefits.

This travesty is a perfect example of the blindness of most of conventional medicine. Working to improve one number, one test result, won't make the patient one whit better. All you're doing is turning off the smoke alarm. The annoying noise (the high test result) goes away, but the house is still burning down around your ears. In this case the positive test results got all the attention, while the negative health results got swept under

the rug. Along with reducing insulin resistance, Avandia causes significant weight gain (it makes your fat cells fatter), creates adverse lipid changes, and leads to fluid retention, edema, anemia, and congestive heart failure. Does that sound like a healthier patient to you? It sure doesn't to me.

So What's a Body to Do?

If you're currently taking Avandia, the first thing to do is get off of it. Unfortunately, as with many drugs, stopping it suddenly carries its own set of risks—yet another reason to look toward nature for solutions. You'll need to work with the prescribing doctor to wean yourself off the drug.

Once that task is finished, you can look to control your diabetes by healing your body. I've written often about ways to control your blood sugar. Here's a summary so you don't have to go rifling through your back issues. For more details on blood sugar control, visit my Web site at www.drmarcuslaux.com.

Repair your diet. A Pritikin-type diet, high in fiber and low in fat and protein, can actually reverse diabetes. This is sort of a boot camp approach, though; nobody can stick to this type of diet for long. Fortunately, the effects show up in as little as three weeks. Once you have your condition under control, move to a diet that's more sustainable in the long run: about 40 percent complex carbohydrates, and about 30 percent each of protein and fat.

Replace nutrients. Diabetes causes the loss of vital nutrients—in many cases exactly the same ones you need to maintain good glucose control. Add these to your daily supplement regimen:

- Alpha lipoic acid, 100 mg per day
- Chromium, 200–300 mcg per day
- L-carnitine, 500 mg three times daily

Move your muscles. Exercise improves the muscles' ability to handle glucose. In the trial that showed benefit from the Pritikin diet, participants also exercised for at least 45 minutes a day. You don't necessarily need that much, but you should find a way to include a good half hour a day of moderate exercise in your routine.

Put all these elements together and you'll go a long way toward healing your entire body—something no pharmaceutical drug will ever be able to do, no matter what the FDA approves.

Continued from page 6

can bring welcome relief. Revert to a high-sugar, low-nutrient diet, and the RLS comes back. That's a pretty big clue!

- Cover your nutritional bases by adding top-quality **supplements** to make sure you're getting enough of everything you need for optimum oxygen-carrying capacity in your blood and muscles, while quenching the flames of inflammation. That means the **B-complex** vitamins, **magnesium**, **vitamin C**, **copper**, and **zinc**. **Vitamin E** (400 IU per day) is also a good idea because it helps support normal neural functioning. I recommend my daily BioComplete multinutrient, and for solid, broad-spectrum antioxidant protection, Native PhytoNutrients.
- Get some solid **rest**. You need a full seven or eight hours of sleep each night in order to recover from RLS, but RLS interferes with your ability to sleep. Gentle, non-addictive, non-drowsy adaptogens can reverse this vicious cycle, as well as gently balance neurotransmitters and help you get the rest you need. A traditional favorite for promoting sleep is the Ayurvedic herb **ashwagandha**.
- Get moderate **exercise**. The veins in your legs contain used blood that has to get back to your heart and lungs to be re-oxygenated, cleaned, and recycled, but that's a steep uphill climb when there's no pump in your feet! A 30-minute stroll once or twice a day gets the leg muscles working, which massages the veins and helps knead blood back up. It also flushes out toxins and accumulated lactic acid, both of which can contribute to RLS symptoms. I don't find exercise by itself to be a cure, but it helps everything you do take effect faster.
- Got tub? Take a **warm bath**. If you have a jetted tub, even better. The warm water improves circulation and relaxes muscle fibers, and often brings enough relief to help you get to sleep (and stay asleep all night). After you are done, rinse your legs with cool water for one minute. The change in temperature improves blood return to the heart, and may give you hours of relief.
- If there's a **Thai massage** therapist in your area, I strongly recommend you make an appointment (even if you don't have RLS!). Originally conceived to treat the Buddha, Thai massage is a series of fluid strokes and manipulations that puts your body into yoga stretches, but the massage therapist does all the work while also stimulating your energy meridians. Best of all, while most massage starts at the upper back and shoulders, Thai massage starts at the feet and legs, and remains there for the first half hour of the 60- to 90-minute basic treatment. Also, **acupuncture** may bring quick symptom relief, even as you are treated. It is less time-consuming, and many insurance companies pay for it. It can be your start to feeling so much better.
- Try the homeopathic remedy *Tarentula hispanica* 12C, three times a day. This works best for people whose legs are always twitching, jerking, or restless. If your symptoms are worse at night, try the remedy *Causticum* 12C in the same dose. If it helps you, don't be shy about repeating a dose as often as needed.

One or more of these treatment directions is likely to give you some degree of satisfying relief. And another benefit will be not just the easing of the uneasy feelings in your legs but, at last, a better night's sleep.

Here's to being naturally well today and every day,

Dr. Marcus Laux

Coming Up In Naturally Well Today

- Peripheral arterial disease
- Candida infection—the “unseen diagnosis”
- Essential oils—more than just aromatherapy

Resources

If no phone number is shown, look for the item in health food or book stores, or visit the Web site to locate a store near you.

Mushrooms

AHCC, American BioSciences,
www.theharmonyco.com,
888-809-1241

Noxylane-4, Lane Labs,
www.lanelabs.com

Immune-Assist, Aloha Medicinals,
www.alohamedicinals.com, 877-508-1077

Mistletoe

Isador, from Weleda,
www.usa.weleda.com,
800-241-1030, ext. 5550

I Want to Hear From You

Tell me what you thought about this month's letter. What did you find most useful?

What would you like to see me write about in future issues?

Send an e-mail to:
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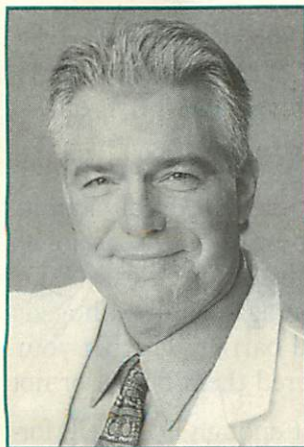
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Dr. Marcus Laux's

Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

October 2007



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Dear Friend,

If you've ever kept a garden, then you know just what a weed is. It's any plant that's some place it doesn't belong. In many cases, the plant may be lovely and even useful in its right place, but in the wrong spot it can take over.

In your body, cells have their places, too. When something happens to upset their balance they can start growing out of control. One example is the skin conditions psoriasis and eczema. When skin cells begin to form faster than they normally slough off, the various layers of skin become inflamed and painful. The right treatment is to find out what's causing the overgrowth, and treat that cause.

The story is much the same with macular degeneration. Blood vessels and cholesterol begin to accumulate where they shouldn't be, in the retina. Again, the right treatment is to find the cause of the overgrowth.

We'll begin with a seasonal topic, colds and flu—and the vaccines expensive ad campaigns will try to push on you. Here's what you need to know this month.

Living Well

Flu Shots and Other Cold Cuts

As flu season settles in, a lot of money will go toward convincing you that if you're vaccinated you'll be okay, and if you're not, you won't. It's simply not true. As unbelievable as it sounds, except for the smallpox shot, nobody's ever proven that vaccines prevent disease in real live humans.

Lucky for you, you have a built-in immune system that can keep you super healthy without ever coming within spitting distance of a vaccine or its side effects. In short, you have a guardian angel. It's the moist, pink tissue that lines your respiratory and digestive tracts. It's called your mucosa, and it's made of many layers of cells held together with a kind of "glue." As long as it's intact, moist, and flexible, it's your faithful personal bodyguard, keeping pathogens at bay. If your mucosa is damaged, however, bugs can get a free pass whether you're vaccinated or not. If any part of your mucosa is under siege, it calls for backup. Within moments, cells arrive on the scene and start blasting the invaders. This is all part of your mucosal immune system, no vaccinations required.

Why Not Vaccinate, Just in Case?

When a pathogen tries to invade your mucosa, one of your immune system's strategies is to produce an antibody known as IgA. But vaccinations introduce the pathogen with a needle, completely bypassing your mucosa and your body's surveillance system. As a result, a different antibody, IgG, is produced. Using IgG to fight a mucosal invader is like trying to win a football game with volleyball players. Ever wonder why the flu vaccine has such a lousy track record? If it stimulates an immune response at all, that response is led by IgG instead of IgA. The newer intranasal flu vaccine (it's squirted up your nose) does stimulate IgA response. But it's not approved for people age 50 and up. Know why? Safety issues. *It contains*

The Danger Depends on the Drug

Have you noticed that West Nile virus has already faded from headline killer epidemic to background nuisance? There's still no vaccine for humans, so how do you explain the disappearance of the "West Nile emergency"? I'll bet you dollars to doughnuts that when a human vaccine does come out, it'll get lots of fanfare, and the statistics they use will show that the death rate before the vaccine was much higher than afterward. *Technically true.* But to give the vaccine credit is a shameful distortion.

live virus, plus ingredients that compromise your nasal mucosa.

We'd all like to spend the rest of our lives happily avoiding the flu or any other disease. Vaccines honestly can't offer that kind of protection, and may in fact weaken your vitality. You can achieve that state naturally, by using common sense (limit your exposure, wash your hands often, keep them away from your face, get great sleep, look after your oral hygiene, and take care of your general health). Finally, keeping up the strength of your guardian angel—your mucosal immune system—is the ultimate barrier to disease. Here's how I can help.

A Mucosal Good Housekeeping Seal

You clean your teeth regularly, right? What about your mucosal tissues? The health benefits are tremendous, and it's easy to do:

- Flush pathogens, toxins, and debris from your nasal and sinus mucosa weekly (or more often as needed) with a saline flush. (A neti pot is good for this. In case you've never used one, I've posted directions on the NWT Web site, www.drmarcuslaux.com.) It takes less than a minute and fortifies you against any respiratory bug. If you do happen to fall victim, saline flushes work

with your immune system rather than against it, so you can recover in record time.

- Keep moving! Pass soft, yet formed bowel movements one to three times daily, to keep your GI tract clean and healthy. If this is a struggle for you, review my articles on correcting constipation and using soluble fiber to heal and strengthen your GI mucosa, in the June and September 2007 issues of NWT.
- Keep your mucosal tissue moist, plump, and resilient by getting plenty of omega-3 fatty acids every day, from high quality fish and fish oils.

"Vaccinate" Yourself With Vitamin D

Studies show that as your blood level of vitamin D falls, so does your ability to ward off disease of all kinds. Unlike vaccines, vitamin D (specifically D3, or cholecalciferol) protects you against all pathogens that try to cross your mucosal barrier, whether your immune system has encountered them before or not.

What's the best way to get enough D3? Well, forget about vitamin D-fortified milk; it doesn't appreciably raise D3 levels. The truth is, it's physically impossible to get enough vitamin D3 from a modern diet. One of the richest food sources is wild-caught oily fish such as salmon or mackerel, but even that provides only 400 IU in a 4-ounce serving. As you'll see in a moment, that's nowhere near enough. And it's well known that as we get older we have a harder time assimilating the D we do consume.

What really knocks your vitamin D level is mainstream medicine's efforts to turn you against your two most significant natural sources: the sun and cholesterol. To put it simply:

Cholesterol + Sun = Vitamin D3.

Sunlight on your skin converts the skin's cholesterol into a compound that is further metabolized by your liver and kidneys into D3. Because cholesterol

DR. MARCUS LAUX

Dr. Marcus Laux is a licensed naturopathic physician who received his doctorate from the National College of Naturopathic Medicine (NCNM) in Portland, OR. Dr. Laux has served as an Assistant Adjunct Professor at the Emperors College of Traditional Oriental Medicine (CA), Clinical Professor of OB/GYN at NCNM, and is currently an Affiliate Faculty Member at Bastyr University (WA). After 15 years of private practice, Dr. Laux's focus is now on researching, writing, and lecturing on science-based natural medicine. He appears regularly in the media—including CNN, BBC, and Fox—and is the coauthor of *Natural Woman*, *Natural Menopause*. He is a leading educator and scientific advisor to the Natural Products industry, and presents continuing education for medical doctors and pharmacists worldwide.

Dr. Laux works closely with Natural Medica, a subsidiary of Healthy Directions, LLC, developing his unique formulations that supply many of the hard-to-find nutrients he recommends. Dr. Laux is compensated by Natural Medica on the sales of these nutritional supplements and health products, which allows him to continue devoting his life to researching innovative, effective health solutions.

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What If I Catch a Cold or Flu Anyway?

MycoPhyto Complex is a highly effective formulation of six different mushrooms grown on an immune-enhancing, adaptogenic, anti microbial herbal food source. You will recover your energy and alertness faster than ever. This is the finest medicine nature has to offer—keep it handy! Take 4–6 capsules, two to three times a day on an empty stomach.

is the main building block of D3, you're almost guaranteed to be D3-deficient if you're taking a drug to lower your cholesterol. And because sunlight drives your skin's production of D3, you'll be underprotected if you're getting too little sun, using even a mild sunscreen, or if you have liver or kidney problems.

Contrary to popular belief, there's no appreciable long-term storage of vitamin D in your body. That means you can't load up on vitamin D in the summer and expect that to tide you over the entire winter—which is why disease outbreaks such as flu epidemics tend to occur when daylight is shorter, weather is more overcast, and D3 stores are falling. For your immune system to protect you the way it was designed to (and remember, our ancestors came from sunny Africa, where their skin produced up to 120,000 IU per day), you have to find a way to get your D levels up—and keep them up—year-round.

How Do I Get Enough D3?

Your ability to make D3 in your skin depends on many factors, including age (the older you are, the less D3 you produce); body mass (increase in body fat decreases D3 production); cholesterol levels (if they're very low, your D3 levels will decline, too); the color of your skin (naturally dark skin absorbs less UVB sunlight and makes less D3); and the amount and intensity of your sun exposure. Quite a few drugs can interfere with your D production as well.

For most people, the answer is to augment your sun exposure with a vitamin D supplement. If you live in the sunny south and are a sun worshipper, just 20 minutes of unprotected exposure to the summer sun will create about 20,000 IU—50 times the government's pitiful recommendation. But if you live north of 40 degrees latitude (above a line drawn from Philadelphia to Indianapolis to Denver to San Francisco) where the sun's rays are more heavily filtered by the Earth's atmosphere, or if you use sunscreen or stay indoors most of the time, you'll certainly need the supplement.

On the strength of the most recent research about D3's role in boosting your mucosal immune

system, I have increased my D3 supplement recommendation to 1,000–4,000 IU daily—with your dose depending on those factors mentioned above.

For those times when you're not able to get enough sun, I recommend a D3 formulation called Bio-D-Mulsion, from Biotics Research. It contains liquid vitamin D3 dispersed in water, and a single drop contains 400 IU. You'll need 3 to 10 drops daily, with food or drink or placed directly under your tongue.

Vitamin D3 fortifies you against every disease, all the time. No needle stick can match that record.

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Natural Wellness

Sun and Salt Save Your Skin

I can likely tell if you have psoriasis or eczema by looking in your closet: There'll be few items that are open at the neck, nothing short sleeved or sleeveless, few short pants or skirts, and mostly lighter colors to camouflage dandruff flakes. It's all to conceal embarrassing lesions that tend to flare up at the worst possible times. Conventional medicine considers both conditions incurable. But one treatment approach can cure many cases of these "incurable" diseases. The secret? Going to the root of the problem.

Skin Deep

Psoriasis causes raised red, itchy/tender plaques under a silvery layer of scales that reveal bleeding, raw spots if scraped. It can occur anywhere from the top of your scalp to between your toes. Near joints, movement makes the skin crack and bleed. Psoriasis' cousin, eczema, has an intense itch and broad fields of little bumps that get redder and weepy if you scratch them. Eczema can occur anywhere too. Both conditions can flare up for weeks at a time, then settle down, then flare up again. People who don't have a skin condition tend to dismiss psoriasis and eczema as simply bothersome. (Many doctors are in this category, I'm sorry to say.) The fact is, these conditions are just as debilitating as higher-profile ones such as diabetes and heart disease.

Mainstream docs say that *psoriasis or eczema* arises when your skin is hyperproliferating: cranking out new skin cells faster than you can shed old ones.

At the same time, your immune system gets tricked into thinking there's a battle going on in your skin. Your immune system responds anyway, and causes inflammation in your already beleaguered skin... where it smolders, for the rest of your life.

Nature-oriented physicians take a sunnier view. Yes, there's hyperproliferation. Inflammation, too. But those are symptoms. For a cure, you have to go deeper than the skin—all the way to your gut. In the cases where healing the gut doesn't provide a complete cure, it does offer marked improvement in symptoms and better control over the condition.

More Than Just Skin Deep

Psoriasis and, especially, eczema are associated with intestinal health issues. Specifically, your food isn't getting **digested** well enough to break down its potentially allergenic components into smaller, easily handled molecular bite sizes. As my colleague Corey Resnick, ND, says, when the immune system has to finish the job of digestion, it isn't happy about the matter. Proper breakdown of food requires strong stomach acid and digestive enzymes, both of which often diminish with age and certainly with acid-blocking medications. The result is often an increase in food sensitivities and potential autoimmune dysfunction. To make matters worse, as the lining of the gut gets further damaged, yet more undigested food makes its way where it shouldn't be.

In an attempt to get rid of the offending substance, your body relies on one of its main detox organs: the skin. If you think about it, eczema and psoriasis actually do you a favor. They're like bright red, itchy neon signs, telling you to look beneath that angry skin and *heal your gut*.

So here's what I propose. Let's give you symptomatic relief immediately, with natural treatments that'll calm and soothe your skin without making things worse. But, to be clear, elimination of the symptoms is not the same as elimination of the underlying disease conditions. So, at the same time, let's pull up the roots of the problem by restoring your digestive power and stopping the overflow of toxins that's ruining your skin—and your health.

Get Relief Now

Some of the best-known treatments for eczema and psoriasis are taking place at spas around the world—in Turkey, Israel, Iceland, and Asia. I'll let you know about them here, but don't despair if you can't indulge yourself in one of these treatments—there's plenty of relief for you at home. I do have

to warn you, though, that it's a process of trial and error. What works for you may not work for another person. Start with the suggestion here that's best for your temperament and pocketbook, then move on if you don't see results within a couple weeks.

- **Try ichthyotherapy.** Known as “doctor fishes” (*Garra rufa*), these little toothless fish live in the Kangal hot springs of Turkey and nibble gently on psoriasis and eczema lesions. It feels like a pleasant micromassage, and the results are nothing short of amazing. Ravaged skin literally looks and feels normal in just 3 weeks, and remission lasts an average of 8 months. The fish eat only dead cells, and leave normal skin alone. There's a video on YouTube about the Turkish spa where the treatment originated (search for “doctor fish”); other treatment centers are in the works in Europe. There's no similar center in the US, but if you're planning an exotic vacation anyway you might want to consider this option.
- **Try balneotherapy.** This term refers to the use of therapies that involve natural springs, mineral water, or sea water. Resting for longer periods of time in water increases pressure slightly throughout your body (not only your circulatory system), which creates increased blood flow and oxygenation to damaged skin. The minerals are drawn into your skin as needed for healing. For example, the Dead Sea in Israel, with its filtered sunshine, low humidity, high salt content, and ultra-low pollution, is a world-famous healing center. This treatment is at least as effective as any other in terms of skin healing, lesion appearance, and length of remission. Patients often see six months or more of relief.
- If a trip to the Middle East isn't in the cards for you, soak for an hour a day in your own tub with a cupful of Dead Sea Mineral Bath Salts added to cool or warm water. Follow your bath with **heliotherapy** (20 minutes of sunshine).
- **Keep your skin moist.** Two excellent products are Totally Shea's Shea Butter Body Lotion, which contains shea butter and aloe vera extract; and Jintu's therapeutic Spring Wind Skin Ointment, a Traditional Chinese Medicine formula designed specifically for psoriasis and eczema. Use both as directed on the package.
- Take a top quality supplemental **fish oil**. The severity and extent of lesions decrease significantly with this supplement. I recommend large doses, 4–6 grams daily for a month or two.
- **Hypnotherapy** relieves symptoms for many, especially in those for whom stress is a factor.

Continued on page 6

Hot Flashes May Mean High Blood Pressure

It's well-known that menopause can raise blood pressure, but a new study from the Weill Cornell Medical College indicates that the high blood pressure is correlated with hot flashes. Dr. Linda Gerber and her team found notably higher systolic blood pressure, even after accounting for menopausal status, in those women with hot flashes.

The conventional medical approach to hot flashes is, unfortunately, still limited to hormone replacement therapy. Evidence accumulating over the last several years shows that conventional HRT is just downright dangerous. If hormones are right for you, use BioIdentical® hormones—the same as the ones your body produces naturally.

Also, as I've written before, the black cohosh product Klimadynon is highly effective at reducing the occurrence and severity of hot flashes—along with the other symptoms of menopause. Use it according to package directions.

If these steps aren't getting your hot flashes under control, have your doctor check your blood pressure—something you should be doing anyway.

Reference: *Int J Cancer* 2007;120:1523–1528.

Just Say No...to Oxygen

At every level of medical care, the practice of giving supplemental oxygen is seen as one with self-evident benefits. After all, we need oxygen to live, so more should be better, right?

As it turns out, this procedure hadn't been tested until recently. Researchers at UCLA scanned the brains of healthy children age 8–15 as the subjects breathed 100 percent oxygen through a mouthpiece. The children didn't respond well at all. Pure oxygen sends the hypothalamus into overdrive, which causes a flooding of neurotransmitters and hormones into the bloodstream. This chemical brew disrupts the heart's pumping ability, constricts blood vessels, and hinders oxygen delivery—just the opposite of the intended effect.

In another arm of the study, carbon dioxide was added to the oxygen. Just 5 percent CO₂ calmed the hypothalamus, relaxed blood vessels, and restored normal breathing.

My advice is that if you or a loved one ever need breathing assistance, ask for compressed room air, which naturally contains oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide. The next best choice is oxygen plus CO₂, but pass on the straight O₂.

I wasn't all that surprised by the results of this study, for two reasons. First, modern medicine is filled with practices that “make sense” but are actually harmful—coronary bypass, hysterectomy, gall bladder removal. Now oxygen straight up can be added to that list. Second, it's been shown time and time again that whole nutrients (in this case, air) are more beneficial than isolated components. You've heard of the studies showing that this nutrient or that one is “harmful”? Well, that's because the patients weren't given *the whole* nutrient: alpha tocopherol instead of the eight components of vitamin E, or vitamin A instead of the huge variety of carotenes needed for total health. The healing power of nature knows no bounds.

Reference: *PLoS Med.* 2007;4:e173.

An Apple a Day Keeps Cancer Away

Cornell researchers have identified a dozen cancer-stopping triterpenoid compounds from Red Delicious apples. This time the punch comes from the peels. These newly discovered chemicals showed activity against liver, colon, and breast cancer cell lines.

This same team of researchers has previously found other apple phytochemicals—flavonoids and phenolic acids—that have similar anti-cancer properties and showed the ability to inhibit tumor growth in human breast cancer cells.

The goal for being your healthiest is to truly eat the “whole” of whole foods. The whole food provides a broad array of medicine with its necessary nutrients. I'd even recommend eating a few of the seeds of your organic fruits as well. I chew and eat a few seeds from my fruits, as they are a concentrated kernel of disease-fighting, health-preserving phyto-protectors. They can be hard, chewy, and bitter at times, but they're also boosting your immunity and health.

To have it all, try enjoying it all!

Reference: *J Agric Food Chem.* 2007;55:4366–4370.

Self-hypnosis is easy to learn, and just as effective as that provided by a hypnotist.

- **Kalawalla**—a standardized extract of the fern *Polypodium leucotomos*—has been used since Mayan times to purify blood and normalize the immune system. It has shown impressive and well-documented protective, rejuvenating, and immunomodulatory effects in a variety of conditions, including psoriasis. It also protects your skin from sun damage, which may be useful in psoriasis patients who have other conditions that would make sun therapy inadvisable.
- Take **fumaric acid**. Many enlightened physicians believe that psoriasis is the result of a metabolic defect in the production of fumaric acid. This compound is normally formed in the skin by sunlight, which may be why patients notice that their condition worsens during the winter months. As a supplement, start with 500 mg daily, increasing by 500 mg at 2–3 week intervals. A maximum dosage is 3,000 mg per day.

Long-Term Relief

Now, focus on the roots of eczema and psoriasis. The following recommendations will help heal your gut, the real source of these skin problems. For true GI health, you'll want to do three things: improve what you put into your system; support the use and metabolism of that good stuff; and help your body get rid of the toxins that would otherwise come out through the skin. You'll see that these recommendations are mostly already part of a healthy program.

- Switch to a **hypoallergenic diet**. A perfect dish for gut normalization is the deeply nourishing and easily digested dish *kitchari*. Most *kitchari* recipes are based on split yellow mung beans and basmati rice, but for psoriasis patients I recommend using sprouted mung beans, available in most produce departments. There's more information about hypoallergenic diets on the NWT Web site, www.drmarcuslaux.com.
- Boost your intake of **soluble fiber**, which helps keep your colon clean, promotes friendly gut bacteria, and speeds mucosal healing by bathing your gut in its favorite nutrients. For more information on soluble fiber, see last month's NWT.
- Take **supplemental digestive enzymes**. I like CompleteGest; one capsule with a snack, two with a light meal, and two to four with dinner.
- **Probiotics** help re-establish your gut's beneficial bacteria, for healthy microbial competition. Products I've had good results with include Bio-

K Plus; Enzymatic Therapy's Acidophilus Pearls; and cultures of *Lactobacillus sporogenes*.

- **Detox**. Fasting removes toxins from your gut and facilitates deep healing by freeing your body to focus on repairing, rebuilding, and maintaining your digestive functions. A fuller explanation of my fasting/detox program is on the NWT Web site, www.drmarcuslaux.com.

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Natural Wellness

Saving Sight With Hormones

Imagine going through the final 10 to 30 years of life without your eyesight. I'm not talking about needing reading glasses, I'm talking about going blind. Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)—the leading cause of vision loss after age 60—affects 11 percent of Americans between 65 and 74, and 28 percent of those age 75 and up. There isn't a thing you can do to protect yourself. ...Or is there?

Your macular tissue is a yellowish disc of neural tissue in the middle of your retina that lets you see things in brilliant high definition. (The rest of your retina, which is for peripheral vision, is less specialized.) If you have AMD, your macular tissue ages before its time, shedding dead cells which mix with glue-y cholesterol to form clods (*drusen*) that stick to your retina and create blind spots. As if that weren't bad enough, in *wet* (advanced) AMD, rogue blood vessels grow between the drusen and leak, covering more retinal tissue with clotted blood.

The symptoms of AMD are easy to pass off as normal vision loss "for your age." Blurry vision, faded colors, and foggy or blank spots in your vision can all be signs of other changes as well as AMD. The one key diagnostic test is called the Amsler grid, a square of intersecting straight lines. If the straight lines look wavy when you stare at the center of the box, then there's a good possibility that AMD has taken hold in one or both of your eyes.

An Intriguing Hypothesis

There's a brilliant hypothesis, based on the work of Drs. George Rozakis and Sergey Dzugan, that began with the knowledge that your eyes are actually specialized brain tissue. Because brain tissue is highly sensitive and has to be selective about the

deliveries it accepts, it's equipped to be pretty self-sufficient. Recent discoveries show that brain tissue can manufacture its own steroid hormones from scratch, including estrogens, progesterone, DHEA, and pregnenolone. Your retina and macula have at least part of that hormone-manufacturing capacity.

Under stress, oxidative assault, nutrient deprivation, illness, and aging, the manufacture and functioning of these hormones can be greatly altered. As this happens, your macular tissues may try to stabilize things by gathering the main ingredient needed to make steroid hormones: cholesterol. This happens on the mitochondrial membrane. Apparently, if your macula can't complete the job unused cholesterol piles up—contributing to the formation of drusen.

Imbalances in sex hormones are common, as levels decline with age—especially, but not exclusively, in women. One study showed that people who have AMD are also low on DHEA—a warning that other hormone levels are probably low as well. According to the Drusen Hypothesis, if you rebalance your hormone levels and restore mitochondrial nutrients, it's possible for the drusen accumulation to slow or stop.

For me, the most exciting part of this hypothesis is that reversing any imbalances could lead to actual reversal of AMD—something that's been only dreamed of before now. Animal studies support this notion: Supplementing with DHEA and pregnenolone (which can be converted into all the major steroid hormones) has been shown to dramatically stimulate damaged neurologic tissue.

If you're over age 50, get your hormone levels checked. If they're significantly low for your age or out of balance, talk to your doctor about ways to safely re-establish and maintain your hormone balance, based on repeated hormone tests. You'll want to use only those compounds that are identical to the ones made by your own body.

An AMD Prevention Program

Fortunately, there are powerful, and proven, steps you can take to prevent AMD, or fight back if you've already got it. The earlier you start the better, but it's never too late.

Your macula is really highly specialized brain tissue, only one cell thick and easily damaged, so your eyes are especially sensitive to damage from those free radicals. After all, they're exposed to a powerful free-radical producer: sunlight. Macular degeneration starts with free-radical damage. Because free radicals are natural byproducts of metabolism, the vision loss

is sometimes viewed as an unavoidable part of getting older. This is a very misleading point of view. Diet and lifestyle, which you have total control over, can create scads of free radicals and zap your eyes faster than any number of birthdays.

For once, conventional medicine has gotten the message. A series of trials known as AREDS has been releasing results for several years now. In one study, a mix of antioxidants was shown to slow or stop the progression of AMD. The program used in the study is pretty basic, using levels that can be found in high-quality multinutrients:

Vitamin C (500 mg);
Vitamin E (400 IU);
Beta-carotene (25,000 IU);
Zinc (80 mg); and
Copper (2 mg).

(Copper isn't an antioxidant, but it competes with zinc for binding in tissues. If you take high levels of zinc for more than a couple of days [say, to treat a cold], then you need additional copper to prevent a copper deficiency.)

I think the researchers were being overly cautious, so I'd recommend that you increase the vitamin C to 3,000 mg daily. I'd also recommend adding the antioxidant **selenium** (start with a dosage of 600 mcg per day for 6 to 9 months, and then continue at 200 to 300 mcg per day).

Another substance useful for AMD is **melatonin**. This hormone, also produced in eye tissue, has a strong antioxidant capacity. One study showed that 3 mg of melatonin at bedtime daily stopped the progress of AMD in about 75 percent of patients.

Watch Your Mouth to Save Your Eyes

Finally, to save your sight, you need to watch your mouth—or, more properly, what goes in it. Every time you eat unhealthy, you're *choosing* to:

- increase your free radical load,
- deprive your cells of good nourishment, and
- miss an opportunity to boost your antioxidants.

Make a habit of that, and the first casualty is your *mitochondria*—tiny power plants that live inside each cell. If mitochondria malfunction, cells die prematurely. And, because your macular tissue is so sensitive and high-maintenance, macular mitochondria are among the first to fall when nutrition is lacking—a big factor in AMD.

To protect your mitochondria, take **acetyl-L-carnitine** (ALC) and **coenzyme Q10** (CoQ10). After

12 months of supplementing with 200 mg of ALC and 20 mg of CoQ10 daily (plus 780 mg of fish oil), AMD patients had improved vision, smaller defects in their visual field, and decreased drusen coverage on their retinas, all thanks to better mitochondrial performance.

Again, I think the researchers were being too conservative. For ALC I recommend 250–500 mg taken one to three times daily. (I like Jarrow and Source Naturals brands, available everywhere.) For CoQ10, take 50 mg twice daily of activated CoQ10 (also called CoQH2, or ubiquinol) like Ubiquinol Super Bioactive CoQ10 from Life Extension (800-544-4440).

When it comes to diet, simply eat as though you were saving your heart. (The risk factors for AMD are the same as those for heart disease.)

- Eat more plant foods: vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains. In particular, your eyes will benefit when you eat lots of green and yellow foods; the macula's yellow color is due to the presence of the carotenoids lutein, zeaxanthin, and meso-zeaxanthin. If you must, you can add a carotenoid supplement such as Super Zeaxanthin with Lutein and Meso-zeaxanthin from Life Extension (800-544-4440). One plant I especially like for AMD is the goji berry (*Lycium barbarum*). Goji berries are known in Traditional Chinese Medicine to improve vision, and they're chock full of highly bioavailable zeaxanthin. Goji is readily available in health food stores and online. Juicing is also a great way to concentrate your intake of powerful antioxidant phytochemicals in a rapidly bioavailable way. Great sources are green leafy vegetables, yellow-orange vegetables, blueberries, broccoli, bell peppers, apples, and raspberries.
- When you do eat meat, choose leaner organic or range-fed animals whenever possible.
- Take supplemental fish oil daily, and eat at least one serving of oily fish per month (salmon, mackerel, or sardines) for a 60 percent drop in your AMD risk. As I mentioned earlier, getting the omega-3 fatty acids in fish oil daily can actually improve AMD.

One other thing: Protect your eyes. Sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays will limit the radiation exposure that causes a virtual explosion of free radicals in your macular tissues.

Conventional medicine provides absolutely no hope for people with AMD. Following the natural path I've laid out will help you keep your sight for a lifetime, and even recover what you thought was gone for good.

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Dr. Marcus Laux

Coming Up In Naturally Well Today

- Headaches—a cure for every cause
- Adrenal gland support
- Mushrooms for cancer prevention and treatment

Resources

If no phone number is indicated, look for the item in health food or book stores, or visit the Web site to locate a store near you.

Colds and Flu

Bio-D-Mulsion, 800-231-5777. Tell them Dr. Laux sent you.

Mycophyto, www.mycophyto.com or 800-521-0160

Skin

Dead Sea Salts, www.masada-spa.com or 800.368.8811

Shea Butter lotion, 800-501-2901 or www.totallyshea.net

Jintu Spring Wind, 503-233-4907 or www.itmonline.org

Kalawalla, www.organichope.com or 888-239-5040

Fumaric acid, www.vrp.com or 800-877-2447

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Tell me what you thought about this month's letter. What did you find most useful?

What would you like me to write about in future issues?

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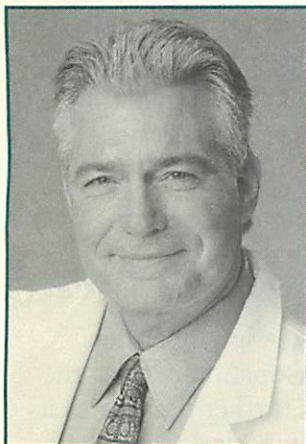
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Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

June 2007



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Dear Friend,

You already know that our world is a toxic place. You may not know that the world has always been toxic for humans. The air your ancestors breathed, the food they ate, the water they drank all contained substances their bodies rejected.

What's different nowadays is the sheer volume of the onslaught. Our modern life is filled with more chemicals than our bodies can handle. We aren't weaker than our ancestors, we just have more to cope with. The result? What would have been just sloughed off by a caveman, or a Renaissance man, is now the last straw.

The one-too-many element could be an artificial pesticide or a natural whiff of pollen. Regardless, you end up with unpleasant and often unexplainable symptoms. In this issue of *Naturally Well Today*, I'll give you ways to deal with some of the more common appearances of overload: cancer and allergies. First, though, here's help for getting rid of those toxins in the first place: natural elimination.

Here's what you need to know this month.

Eating Well

The Seat of All Good Health

If you're like most Americans, your bathroom experience is somewhat less than satisfying. You might think the topic is embarrassing, but it's so important that I'm just going to lay it all out for you. Ideally, you should feel (and heed) the urge to defecate within about 90 minutes after eating a meal. Every meal. Three times a day. The result should be moist but well-formed, not hard or nugget-like, not overly messy, free of straining and long sessions on the toilet, and when you're done you should feel refreshed. Technically, constipation is anything less than three bowel movements *per week*, but even once-a-day backs us into an unhealthy corner.

The healthy human colon isn't just a trash chute. It's an efficient dis-assembly line that sorts through the food we eat, lets valuable nutrients into the bloodstream, and slams the door on toxins and pathogens. Those last get swept away with the indigestible fiber, which also cleans the colon's nooks and crannies on the way out. Movement of all that material is controlled by your colon's inner ecology, nerves, and muscles, which squeeze in a coordinated rhythm called a *peristaltic wave*.

The main natural trigger for defecation is the *gastrocolic reflex*: When sensors in the stomach get stimulated by the arrival of a new meal, the lower colon's muscles contract and eject the stool that's waiting by the back door. When everything is in sync you don't have to push; just give your permission. That's a healthy colon.

For this to happen three times a day, fiber and water are essential, but you also need healthy colon walls, nerves, and muscles. And therein lies the problem: Many things interfere with healthy colonic functioning, making constipation the most common digestive complaint in the country—and increasingly so as we get older. According to one widely used reference, the *Merck Manual of Geriatrics*, up to 60 percent of people over age 65 use laxatives, and 74 percent of people in assisted-living facilities use them *daily*—mostly because of diet, drugs, and dehydration.

Keeping Clean Is an Inside Job

Waste isn't just leftovers you don't need; it's toxic stuff. You're taking a pretty big risk by leaving it in your gut, right alongside nutrients that are being absorbed into your bloodstream. Those toxins may well get absorbed too, and poison you. Your liver protects you from some toxins by binding them up in a sort of chemical straitjacket before shunting them to your colon for elimination. But if you're constipated, waste sits in your colon longer, which gives bacteria (whose job, after all, is to break things down) the chance to unbuckle those straitjackets. And the longer stool sits in there, the more it putrefies or ferments—like a rotting carcass. When this occurs inside your colon, healthy colon tissue gets weakened, just as grease spots weaken a paper bag. This makes it easier for toxins to get past barriers and into your bloodstream. The result is *autointoxication* (self-poisoning). When these compounds get into the blood, they can cause problems, from joint pain and pimples to heart distress and cancer.

Sometimes Fiber, Sometimes Not

Sometimes regularity can be restored simply by adding more fiber to your diet. Other times the problem takes a more in-depth solution.

Fiber adds bulk to the stool, which stretches the walls of the colon so its sensors “know” there’s something there. The colon’s nerves and muscles respond to that stretch by initiating the peristaltic wave, coaxing material on down the dis-assembly line to collect in the final 8 inches of the colon. Then, when you eat a meal and the gastrocolic reflex kicks in, nerves “feel” the presence of that bulk near your rectum and stimulate a satisfying grand finale.

But for a lot of people, and increasingly with age, you can eat All Bran cereal until the cows come

A Simple Cause for Many Problems

A year ago, I wrote about a condition called hypochlorhydria (low stomach acid), which increases your risk for such health problems as autoimmune disease, neurological problems, food allergies, eczema, and oh, by the way—constipation. My point then was that a simple condition that’s easy to fix can be at the root of many seemingly unrelated conditions. Constipation is one of those root problems. (If you think hypochlorhydria might be contributing to your constipation, check out my report taken from the June 2006 *NWT*. I’ve posted it online for you at www.drmarcuslaux.com.)

home and get little or no relief. That’s because the colon’s nerves and muscles are malfunctioning. I’ve already mentioned hypochlorhydria (see the box above) as a potential cause. Here are a few others:

Weakened colon muscles. A low-fiber diet weakens the colon. When constipation occurs, the colon gets toxic, which causes further damage to its already weakened nerves and muscles. Chronically using laxatives that work by irritating the GI tract, rather than by stimulating normal contractions, worsens the problem. (Nicotine and caffeine are irritants, which is why so many people use them to help achieve their morning constitutional.) Over time, the colon gets so damaged that it becomes immobile, and you become increasingly dependent on unnatural methods to move your bowels.

Stress. When you’re stressed, scared, or fighting mad, your sympathetic (fight-or-flight) nervous system takes the wheel, and your parasympathetic system (which runs your digestive tract) takes a back seat. It makes sense, because digestion is less important than outrunning or slaying whatever real or imagined dragons are threatening you. But when stress is chronic, gut muscles are offline so much that they no longer perform in rhythm.

DR. MARCUS LAUX

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Dr. Laux works closely with Natural Medica, a subsidiary of Healthy Directions, LLC, developing his unique formulations that supply many of the hard-to-find nutrients he recommends. Dr. Laux is compensated by Natural Medica on the sales of these nutritional supplements and health products, which allows him to continue devoting his life to researching innovative, effective health solutions.

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Food intolerances. Cow's milk is a common and well-documented cause of severe constipation in babies. Many adults react the same way to foods such as wheat gluten. Ironically, constipation only makes the allergy worse by damaging the colon wall, which becomes leaky and allows allergens to get into the circulation. Identifying and removing the culprit food from the diet resolves the constipation.

Restoring Regularity

Most cases of adult constipation are due to a combination of colon damage and a lack of fiber. To fix the problem permanently, you need to change your life, not just your breakfast cereal. You don't need harsh drugs. Deconditioned colon muscles can be reawakened, retrained, and restored, naturally. Here are my favorite methods. (Where applicable, follow label directions.)

Fix your diet. Pesticides and other chemicals are a burden on your GI tract, so choose organic foods whenever possible. You'll also want to add digestive enzymes to support total bowel health. Chlorella is another healthy choice that's my all-time favorite; it's a potent detoxifier, and its cell walls are a good source of fiber. Drink plenty of water, too—a minimum of eight 8- to 12-ounce glasses per day.

Know your fiber. Replace low-fiber foods (white bread, pasta, rice, and sugar; fruit juices; fatty foods) with high-fiber foods (whole-grain breads, pasta, and cereals; flax; brown rice; whole fruits and vegetables; and beans). Your goal is 30 to 45 grams of fiber per day, most of it as *soluble* fiber rather than *insoluble*. The insoluble fiber found primarily in whole grains, nuts, and brans is just a bulking agent, giving the colon walls a stimulating stretch. Soluble fiber does that too, but it also heals and strengthens the colon so it can respond properly. It's found in oats, barley, peas, beans, and most whole fruits and vegetables.

If you want to add a fiber supplement, use one that's rich in soluble fiber, to help your colon heal. My favorites are gentle, natural, supportive, and can be taken on a regular basis. All are widely available. (See the *Resources* box on page 8 for some favorites.)

- **Inuflora** contains a special kind of prebiotic soluble fiber called *inulin*.
- **Fiber Delights** provides two kinds of soluble fiber: *inulin* and oat bran.
- **Psyllium**, the seed husks of *Plantago psyllium*.

Get the right bacteria. Remember earlier when I said that bacteria can disassemble compounds that make their way into your colon? Well, that's a vital

job, and they're good at it. Sometimes, though, your intestines can be overtaken by unfriendly bacteria that interfere with the work the good guys *are doing*; stress and antibiotic therapy are two of the biggest culprits. Take a high-quality probiotic supplement, one that contains multiple strains of bacteria, to keep up the population of the friendly bacteria.

Move your body, move your bowels. The naturally stimulating effect of mild to moderate exercise is indisputable (as long as you drink enough water to make up for the moisture you lose in your exhaled breath and sweat). Even horses get constipated when they're locked up in a stall all day, instead of out in a pasture taking a step for every nibble of grass.

Mind your mother. In my experience, the Ayurvedic herbal compound **triphala** (considered in India to be like a "mother" because of its devoted care of the body) is the master remedy for constipation. Both potent and mild, triphala directly stimulates colon muscles and promotes detoxification and healing. Triphala also has anti-cancer, antioxidant, antibacterial, and anti-diabetic benefits (to name a few). Because of its high nutrient content, many people (including me) use it daily for nutritional support.

Consider biofeedback. If colon dysfunction persists long enough, idle gut muscles might need extra help to get back on track. In a randomized study of patients with severe colon muscle dysfunction, biofeedback effectively retrained and reconditioned colon muscles and nerves for significant improvement in bowel performance.

The pleasurable feeling after you move your bowels is a natural reaction to the removal of toxins. Imagine how good you'll feel all over once you begin moving all your body's toxins all the way out.

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Natural Wellness

The Real Cancer Story

It's almost a given these days that conventional medicine is lost at sea. Cancer is the star witness that proves that fact. For evidence, look at conventional cancer treatment: chemo and radiation are violent, destructive, and imprecise—signs that the medical system is pulling out all the stops because it doesn't know what else to do. Treatments are based on the hope that enough cancer cells will die, and

It's a Virus! It's a Gene!

No matter what you've heard, cancer isn't something you "catch." That's a big lie, but a profitable one to spread because it's part of a brilliant marketing spin designed to get you to believe in the cervical cancer vaccine. If the human papilloma virus truly was the cause of cervical cancer, then every woman who contracted the virus would get cancer. But 90 percent of women who "catch" the virus kick it out, without a trace, within three years. You watch—before long the vaccine manufacturers will start taking credit for that. It's disgraceful. Like most everything in conventional medicine's approach to cancer, it's motivated by greed.

enough normal cells will recover, that the patient will live long enough to be called a "survivor." When they use words like "remission" instead of "cure"; when success means an extra few months of survival and those few months are spent suffering from horrible side effects, let's be honest: The whole system needs to be scrapped.

There are treatment options for cancer that make more sense. But to make sense of them, first you have to know what cancer is and what it isn't.

Sneaky Is as Sneaky Does

Cancer is a natural life process. It happens in every body, every day, due to a whole host of influences—from food, from pollution, from pathogens, even from normal body functions. When you're healthy, your body recognizes cancer at a molecular level and takes care of it—no big deal, just business as usual for a healthy body.

In a body that's no longer completely healthy, normal cells try their best to survive, but it's an increasingly intense struggle. At some point, individual cells do what you'd do if your world became a dangerous place: They go underground...try to find some safer, warmer place to set up housekeeping...stop abiding by the old rules...stop answering.

I've heard many people recently diagnosed with cancer say: But I feel fine! They feel betrayed by their bodies for allowing cancer to develop. But everything wasn't fine. The human body has built-in redundancy, for that very purpose—to help us feel okay, and function okay, even if everything isn't okay. That's meant to protect us, but it's not able to take on all comers, or mend all stressors. It's like that undersized spare tire in your trunk. You can use it to get to the nearest service station, but if you expect to ride that puny tire clear across the country at 70 miles per hour, you won't get very far.

The Taxman Cometh

Toxins, pollutants, and high-stress lifestyles all tax the very systems that have to rally in order to keep the body healthy. A body that's become a high-sugar consumer is a perfect world for cancer cells—they love sugar over all other foods, and have about 15 times more receptors for sugar than healthy cells do. A diet that provides inadequate nutrients to support a top-flight immune system gives your body all the reasons it needs to look the other way when a pathogen comes calling. A body that doesn't exercise becomes an oxygen-deficient environment, which dares cells to mutate. In fact, when lab workers want to promote cell mutation for studies, they simply reduce the oxygen content of the atmosphere.

All these factors begin to preoccupy your body's defenses, leaving it vulnerable to cancerous transformations and stimulating the cancer genes that are naturally inside us all. When our natural protective mechanisms are shot, cancerous cells that ordinarily would have been taken out start taking over.

You don't "catch" cancer. Cancer doesn't "happen" to you. It arises when your body stops holding cancer at bay. In fact, as you may have heard said of prostate cancer, many people die of old age with cancer, not from it. In a healthy body, it's possible to live well, happy, and long with a slow-growing, non-invasive cancer and never even know it.

From this point of view, you can see why conventional cancer treatment is not even close to being therapeutic. When someone gets cancer, the real answer is hardly ever chemo or radiation. Instead, the answer is to address whatever aspect of the person's life that made his or her cells go underground. Reversing a trend isn't easy, but it can be done.

In next month's letter, I'll talk about cancer treatments that make sense. Until then, consider your cells, and the factors that contribute to cancer. You can affect your future, by adding a little exercise, some high-quality nutrients, and a few more trips to the bathroom to your life.

Living Well

Natural Defense for Allergies

If you know what the "allergy salute" is (frequent nose itching or rubbing), you're probably one of the 35 million Americans who have a love-hate relationship with summer because of their seasonal allergy symptoms. If you're really unlucky, the misery stretches across all four seasons thanks to indoor

allergens—from mold, cockroaches, mice, and dust mites (more exactly their feces)—all floating around in the air you breathe. I know allergy sufferers wonder if there's any way to live in this world full of allergens without drowning in your own fluids, scratching your eyes out, and feeling like your head is going to explode. It does seem pretty amazing that some people can breathe in the same particles as allergy sufferers and have nary a sniffle. How come one person's body ignores those particles, while the allergy sufferer's immune system overreacts to them?

Natural medicine often associates allergies with weak adrenal, immune, and digestive functions, but when you're feeling miserable you only want to hear about how to get relief. The typical short-term fix is drugs: steroids to block the release of histamine and stop the inflammation; antihistamines to neutralize the histamine that's already been released; and decongestants to shrink the swelling inside your nasal passages so you can breathe. The problem with this approach is that it leads to an array of side effects, including rapid heart rate, nosebleeds, high blood pressure, depressed immunity, grogginess, irritability, and dehydration. All of these events undermine the body's already weakened immune system and make it more sensitive to allergens and *less able to fight off whatever viruses and bacteria* happen to be in the neighborhood. You're actually worse off than before you began taking the drug.

In addition, most allergies get worse over time—and by worse I mean stronger symptoms from a longer list of “trigger” allergens. Of course this means that you'll need higher doses of allergy meds for more days of the year to get the same level of relief that you're used to. This is great for drug companies, but not so hot for you.

Allergy Solutions That Work

As a naturopathic physician, I want to give you relief from your symptoms while taking care to not make your overall problems worse. I'd rather bolster your health for a more balanced immune response (a true allergy cure), and help you feel better now. I've compiled a list of some effective natural treatments that will do just that. Each of them will help give you relief from your suffering today, while starting you on the path to an allergy-free tomorrow. Effective treatment does require some trial and error on your part, to see which will work best for you. Start with the one that seems most appealing, then add another if you find that your symptoms haven't

gone away completely. You'll find other effective therapies for allergies at www.drmarcuslaux.com.

Keep spring cleaning going year 'round. Daily *neti* (nasal flushing) is an ancient Ayurvedic tradition in which you wash allergens, pollutants, and contaminants out of your nasal passages. Don't worry, though; it's not like accidentally getting water in your nose while swimming, which *can be uncomfortable* and even sting. In fact, *neti* is quite comfortable, and after you do it you feel wonderful. Beyond cleaning your nasal passages, *neti* stimulates the glands in your sinuses (which generate about a quart of mucus a day) to make thinner mucus, making it easier to flush your nose from the inside. By giving your nose a good cleaning and *thereby* dramatically cutting down on your close encounters with pollen, *neti* helps tame your allergic response and gives your immune system a chance to breathe.

A small, specialized pitcher called a *neti pot* is the most common means of performing this daily flushing. You can get a *neti pot* online or at most health food stores for less than \$20. To use a *neti pot*, follow these simple instructions:

1. Fill the pot with a warm salt-water solution (dissolve a heaping 1/4 teaspoon non-iodized fine-grained table salt, or a heaping 1/2 teaspoon non-iodized salt in one cup of warm water).

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Is It a Cold or Is It an Allergy?

It can be hard to tell the difference between an allergic reaction and a common cold. Not everyone exhibits *all the same* signs, but your symptoms will give you some clues.

Allergies:

The following symptoms come on *all at once*, and they can and *will* last for months:

- Sneezing, especially several times in a row.
- Nasal discharge that is watery and clear, and usually stays that way.
- Itchy feelings around the eyes and nose, and even deep in the ears.

Colds:

The following symptoms appear one after another—often starting with a runny nose, and followed by congestion.

- Nasal discharge that turns thicker and yellowish, indicating a bacterial infection.
- A feeling of fatigue or body aches.
- A fever!

In the Know with Dr. Laux

Q Dear Dr. Laux,
I just received the results of some recent lab work, and I have no idea what most of this means. A couple of my values are out of the reference range, but I don't know how worried I should be. For example, my "BUN" and "creatinine" are a bit high.

—Katie N., via e-mail

A Dear Katie,
Laboratory work has become a standard part of a medical visit, and I understand your curiosity and frustration at trying to figure out what it all means. Too often doctors just throw information at you without giving you the background. The chemistry screen, or chemistry panel, is a common collection of routine tests that surveys kidney and liver function, electrolytes, proteins (including antibodies), and other factors such as blood fats and indicators of muscle/bone health. BUN and creatinine are both related to your kidney health.

Broad blood testing tells more about your general health than it does about specific ailments. The results evaluate broad health categories and body systems, telling you that all appears well or that further investigation is warranted. When an imbalance appears in these first-tier tests, further specific tests can target the diagnostic inquiry more precisely. If you watch medical TV shows such as *House*, you can see how one test often leads to further tests and questions.

It's important to distinguish between results that make you go "Hmm" and those that make you say, "Oh, no!" For tests of liver and kidney function the "Oh, no!" level is generally three times the upper end of the normal range. That would mean a BUN of 75 mg/dL or more (vs. the normal 8–23).

Begin in the Kidneys

BUN is blood urea nitrogen, or just urea—a waste product made in the liver from ammonia, a breakdown product from dietary protein intake. It's passed out of the body mostly via the kidneys. Its level gives information regarding the health and functioning of the kidneys; specifically, is it being filtered out or not?

A high BUN level indicates that the kidneys are not working at their best. It can suggest kidney

dysfunction, urinary obstruction or infection, or decreased blood circulation to the kidneys from any number of causes. Elevated levels are found in kidney failure as well, but keep in mind that a high-protein diet can also increase levels.

Low levels could mean liver disease (urea is made there), a low-protein or high-carb diet, or even super hydration, but it's not generally a kidney concern *per se*.

Getting a Fuller Picture

This information then must be compared with other lab tests to confirm which organ system is most likely involved. Creatinine is one of those tests to consider next (along with a urinalysis, if you are doing a complete workup).

Creatinine is another measure of kidney function. Increased creatinine levels in the blood suggest conditions or diseases that affect the kidneys, just as with BUN. Again, though, it could be temporarily bumped up due to muscle damage. Low levels are not common and are usually of little concern.

There is no "standard" reference range for creatinine. Most labs report similar, but not identical, reference ranges. Compare your lab results with the range given from your specific lab for best evaluation results.

When BUN is elevated, looking at the ratio between BUN and creatinine can help narrow down where the problem may be. Is it in the kidneys or somewhere else? When BUN is high, and creatinine levels are high, then the renal system is the most likely candidate for attention. But if BUN is high and creatinine is low, then the problem is most likely not the kidneys, and you and your doctor will need to look further.

One common medical mistake is treating test results rather than the patient. You are more than a blood test result, and disease is more than a number. Your whole health needs to be evaluated alongside your lab results.

I'll go through other lab tests and their best value in the coming months, as some testing can be helpful, others confusing, and many plain useless.

Here's to your best health ever!

Dr. Marcus Laux

Natural News Today

Love Curbs Cholesterol

An enlightening new study shows the pen has the punch of a pill—plus, it's safer, and you don't need a prescription. You can cut your total cholesterol by expressing your feelings of warm affection, whether to a significant friend, relative, or romantic partner. If you're shy, no worries, as in this case your fond thoughts put to paper can not only cause your sweetheart to swoon, but also can be soothing to your own dear heart.

In this study, healthy college students were assigned to one of two groups. One group wrote about their affections for a meaningful person in their life, the other simply wrote about non-romantic topics. All the participants wrote for 20 minutes on three separate occasions over a five-week period. Total cholesterol was measured at the beginning and completion of the study.

For the group expressing love, total cholesterol dropped by an average of more than 10 points. For the others, simply writing didn't provide this benefit. It made no difference what language was used, as long as the writer shared affection.

Other studies have shown that attention and caring for others can improve health for those on the receiving end, but this study shows health improvement in those offering the affection.

Hey, ET, next time don't phone home...write!

Reference: *Hum Commun Res* 2007;33:119–142.

Flower Power Beats the Drug Punch

If you only knew what you saw in the mainstream media, you'd think the only solution for arthritis pain is to numb it with a powerful drug. Well, in Europe, nature and the naturopathic doctor trumped the drugs.

The herb known as Leopard's Bane (*Arnica montana*) has been used successfully for centuries by native healers worldwide. In a recent study, a traditional fresh, organic flower-tops gel of arnica was put to the test, and this alpine alchemy ached the drug.

A randomized, double-blind study compared the use of a topical arnica gel preparation versus a leading synthetic NSAID, topical ibuprofen, in relieving arthritis symptoms of the hand.

Twenty Swiss medical clinics evaluated hand function and pain levels in 204 patients who had current pain and radiographically confirmed osteoarthritis. The gels were then applied three times a day for three weeks.

The study results showed that both groups had clinically relevant improvements in both pain relief and hand function. In fact, the two groups showed similar reduction in pain (26.6 percent for the arnica group vs. 23.9 percent for the ibuprofen group) and improved hand function, as measured by grip strength, tool use, and ability to tie a simple knot. Both treatments were well-tolerated.

In the arnica group, 64 percent of the patients assessed their pain relief as "good" or "very good," while in the ibuprofen group the figure was 58.8 percent. Even the investigators ranked the arnica gel higher than the ibuprofen gel. In other words, the flower power proved as effective (and then some) as the pharmaceutical painkiller!

The study used an organic arnica gel first developed by Alfred Vogel, a pioneering traditional European naturopath. Arnica originally captured people's attention when they observed the nimble mountain goats. When injured, the goats preferentially seek out the local alpine arnica during recovery. Nature knows, we just have to listen better.

Reference: *Rheumatol Int.* 2007;27:585–591.

Continued from page 5

2. Bend over your bathroom sink, so you are staring down at the sink basin. Fit the neti pot nozzle into your right nostril, turn your head to the left, and tip the pot so the solution goes in your right nostril and out the left. When the entire contents have run through your nose, refill the pot and repeat from the other side.

3. Then, gently blow your nose. Repeat once or twice daily.

Eat an apple a day. Whole apples, with peels, contain an unbelievable concentration of anti-inflammatory and antioxidant flavonoids, including one of the most powerful flavonoids known to man—quercetin, which actually *inhibits histamine release*. A whole apple is a better "supplement"

than any isolated nutrient because, like other whole foods, it has a rich and diverse combination of phytochemicals, anti-inflammatories, and antioxidants that work together and enhance each others' benefits. In a study published in the September 2003 issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, the results indicated that eating apples regularly, rather than simply ingesting the isolated nutrients present in apples, decreased patients' risk of asthma and bronchial hypersensitivity. I recommend eating an apple every day, increasing your intake of all whole fruits and vegetables, and eating more foods rich in naturally anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids, such as cold-water fish and flax meal.

Create a vitamin C buffer. Buffered vitamin C needs to be taken as a supplement to help fight allergies. At doses of 2,000 to 10,000 mg per day, taken in divided doses, vitamin C is a well-respected natural antihistamine. A recent animal study (March 2007, *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*) showed that these doses of vitamin C can prevent pollen-induced allergic reactions. Not all vitamin C is the same; see the resource box at the right for a source I trust.

Take these natural solutions for fast relief. The following herbs and homeopathic remedies bring fast, proven relief of allergy symptoms and start reversing the allergy itself. They are all available online or in health food stores (follow the package directions with any of these treatments).

- **Septilin**—an Ayurvedic polyherbal compound that, in addition to its anti-inflammatory relief of allergy symptoms, has been shown to support healthy immune function.
- **Aller-7**—an herbal blend I recommend for respiratory support.
- **Petadolex**—an extract of the butterbur shrub. The active herbal compound *petasin* has anti-inflammatory and anti-allergy properties.
- **AllerAide**—a 3-herb compound from the well-respected American homeopathic formulary Boericke & Tafel. Under rigorous scientific testing, it brought good to very good results in 90 percent of allergy sufferers. AllerAide is available at most health food stores.
- **Dana Ullman's Homeopathic Mini-Kit for Allergies**—This kit contains three separate homeopathic preparations including Galphimia Glauca, which has shown to have significant benefits for respiratory allergies.

Allergies are the classic sign of an overloaded system. The remedies I've suggested above provide your body with the break it needs to recover. Once you've successfully overcome your symptoms, the rest your body gets will allow it to withstand future assaults.

References:

- Evid Based Complement Alternat Med* 2006;3(4):397-409
J Allergy Clin Immunol 2006;118(2):434-440.
J Nutr 2004;12:3-5.
Arch Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg 2004;130:1381-1386

Here's to being naturally well today and every day,

Dr. Marcus Laux

Coming Up In Naturally Well Today

- Cancer Part 2: Sorting through therapies
- Goodbye to acid reflux and heartburn
- Treatment for restless legs

Resources

If no phone number is indicated, look for the item in health food or book stores, or visit the Web site to locate a store near you.

Regularity

Inuflora, from Naturally Vitamins, www.naturally.com
 Fiber Delights, from Enzymatic Therapy, www.vitanetonline.com

Allergies

Vitamin C with Bioflavonoid Immune Support, from Ethical Nutrients, www.ethicalnutrients.com

I Want to Hear From You

Tell me what you thought about this month's letter. What did you find most useful?

What would you like to see me write about in future issues?

Send an e-mail to:
Feedback@DrMarcusLaux.com



For more naturopathic advice and health solu-

tions, visit me online at www.DrMarcusLaux.com.

While you're there, be sure to sign up for my free monthly health e-letters for advice on a variety of health concerns.

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